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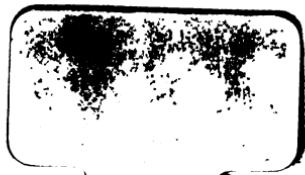
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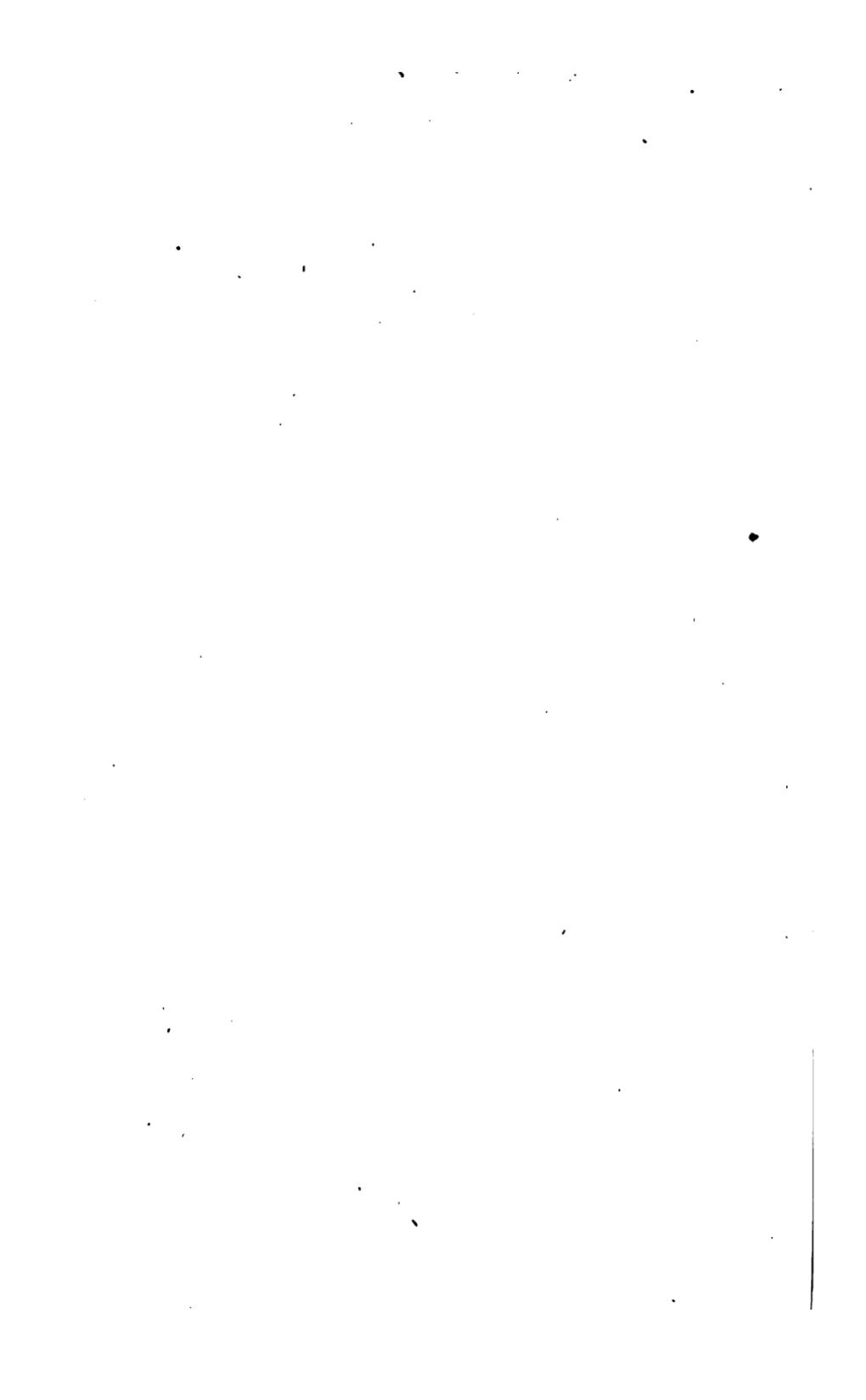
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THE
LADY OF GLYNNE.

BY
THE AUTHOR
OF
"MARGARET AND HER BRIDESMAIDS."

" What shall I do to gain eternal life?
 Discharge aright
The simple dues with which each day is rife;
 Yea, with thy might.
Ere perfect scheme of action thou devise
 Will life be fled,
While he who ever acts as conscience cries
 Shall live, though dead."

(Kosciusko)
TRANSLATION OF SCHILLER.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1857.

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1

I DEDICATE THIS HISTORY

TO

NELL G. H.

BECAUSE, IF MY HEROINE HAS NO OTHER MERIT,

SHE AT LEAST BEARS A NAME

THAT WILL BRING BEFORE THOSE WHO KNOW

Sweet Nell,

THE IMAGE OF ONE OF WHOM IT CAN SURELY BE SAID,—

“ If two Gods should play some heavenly match,
And on the wager lay two earthly women,
And ‘ Nellie’ one, there must be something else
Pawn’d with the other; for the poor rude world
Hath not her fellow.” —*Shakspeare*.



[REDACTED]

THE LADY OF GLYNNE.

CHAPTER I.

"Morn,
Waked by the circling hours, with rosy hand
Unbarred the gates of life."—MILTON.

IT was four o'clock in the morning of the 22nd of June, that I opened our cottage door, and ran across the lawn, towards a large old beech tree, whose mighty branches swept towards the ground. Steadying myself upon the lowest, with the ease of constant habit, I passed up from one great bough to another, until I seated myself at last, in a natural sort of throne, formed by the quaint growth of the tree.

It was my birthday. To-day I was ten years old.

I had asked as a favour, the evening before, that I might rise so early as to anticipate the sun ; and my mother had given me permission.

But I was too late ; as I sat myself down in queenly freedom, on my green throne, a stray sunbeam glanced vividly through a bird's path amid the leaves, and shot me in both eyes.

I was not one to grow sulky on disappointment : I played at bo-peep with the sunbeam, until I laughed aloud, forgetting that to-day I was quite ten years old.

But soon I was startled. My throne, when I first perched myself upon it, was coolly, darkly green. Now it was turning into a vast hall of burnished gold. Every leaf was tinged with a purple light, every branch was crimsoning with rosy hues ; even my fingers, as I touched them half in fear, became glorious in their transparent colour, and yet no harm did I feel.

I peeped out of my bower ; the beech tree was

glowing with brighter hues every moment. A trembling pulse beat in my heart, as the story of Moses and the burning bush rushed to my memory. But I was a little foolish child, in no manner worthy to witness such an instance of God's power. This was but the semblance of that power, and my hands locked themselves together reverently, in gratitude for the sight that reminded me of so glorious a favour.

But as I glanced, lawn, trees, cottage and flowers, all gradually glowed in the same golden light, and I saw that the sun had only now risen to his full power and beauty. It was but one of his little rosy harbingers, with whom I had been playing bo-peep.

"Thank you," said I, "thank you for this birthday show, this beautiful spectacle."

Each moment that I looked gave to each moment brighter hues. I wondered if heaven was as fair, as gorgeous. Perhaps the heavens themselves had opened, and poured in these floods of rainbow colours, to recal the winged ministers of

God, who guard the earth in the dark hours of night ; and nought but a little child of ten to witness such a sight. Dull, heavy, unconscious earth ! No angels could I see, but perhaps those glancing rosy lights, those flitting glorious beams, might be the flutter of their wings, as they swept swiftly up towards the open portals of heaven. And as they were gathered together in shining crowds, disappearing with glad celerity, until at last the whole world changed to its own earthly hue ; the trees became green, the cottage white, the flowers natural, my throne but a great knot of gnarled boughs, and the broad, flaring sun looked one full in the face. My birthday show was over, the angels were all at home, and at rest ; the world's work was about to begin.

For awhile the sun and I had the world to ourselves. I liked this. To me it seemed a fine thing, that such a power, such a wonder should blaze up into the fullest radiance merely for me, while the bustling, fevered world lay as if dead before us.

But this did not last long.

There was a twitter among the branches; a stir. Then arose the soft coo of a ring-dove above me, startling me much, for all it was so sweet and low. Like a flitting shade, a hare glanced across the lawn. Anon he came back, looked warily about, sat up, washed his face, and again glanced round.

Then, like a guilty thief as he was, he began to nibble mamma's best carnations. Absorbed with watching him, I had not heeded other signs of life. Almost into my ear, carolled a pert and well-conditioned blackbird, while on every side of my throne other warblers sang their morning hymns. Shy little rabbits peeped out; awed by the superior size and prior claims of the hare, they contented themselves with nibbling blades of grass, while playful squirrels disported themselves with an agility and carelessness that showed they dreamt not of human eyes gazing on this early scene. Drowsy cattle began to rise and stretch themselves, with the

soft low of call to each other. Sheep were already industriously pursuing the aim of their existence; all nature was awake, and at work.

Then, as if a sudden universal order had gone forth, the whole chorus of birds ceased their morning song, and, like the four-footed wingless creatures, began to obey the instincts of nature, and collect their food. So the world grew almost silent again, and with an arm clasped round a branch of my throne, I leant back, half dreaming, half thinking.

I was ten years old. According to the allotted sphere of life, I might live to see that day ten years come round six times more.

To conjecture what I should be like, how I should feel at so remote a period, was beyond my present powers of thought. Gradually I came to the conclusion it would be well for me if I considered the first anniversary of ten years, that might be my lot.

Should I wish that day ten years, as my first desire, to see the sun rise? Should I climb up

and be able to sit in my airy throne? And should I love it, as now?

There seemed a doubt, not only of a power to seat anything much larger than my present self, on so fairy a seat, but of the wish to do so. With my woman's stature should I not have woman's thoughts and wishes? A girl of ten might like to climb a tree, and seat herself amid its branches, an enthroned queen of a childish kingdom; but when I am twenty, I may love the trees, the early morning, the sweet face of nature, but not climb trees. This was certain. Nevertheless, to be a queen was pleasant. Let me be ever so much of a woman, I should like a throne, though not in a tree; I should wish to rule a kingdom, but not one wholly composed of branches and leaves, with nought but birds for my subjects. If I had a kingdom, I thought I should rule it right well. But kingdoms came not with a wish, and yet certainly I must be a queen, queen of an household.

That I was already, reigning supreme in the

court of love, with no bounds to my sway, no rules in my dominion. And on this my tenth birthday, the position of my kingdom stood thus.

A warm, sunny, cheerful kingdom, very small, very confined. But what seeds were planted in love, grew and flourished there. Cold, ungenial flowers faded and became blighted, as if fingers of frost had touched them. One plant grew and flourished there, far and wide. It was called Truth, and so much did the queen love it, it was so cherished as to bear fruit in all seasons and times.

Fruitful and cheerful as was my kingdom, yet within its innermost corner lay one bare sad spot. “Must this part of my kingdom ever remain so?” whispered the queen with tears—and the reply came low and clear, “Evermore must it remain so: your kingdom is so strong, vigorous, redundant of health, but for this one sad spot, it might become over-weening, proud, rebellious.” And the leaves of my throne shook

with the sobs of me, the child, as I took into my heart the sad answer. But even as the pang rushed through me, did I pray God, that however lonely and alone I was to be, still might I keep a cheerful, truthful heart, still might I ever be—

“ Queen o'er myself.”

CHAPTER II.

“As the sun
Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image
In the atmosphere, so often do the spirits
Of great events stride on before the events ;
And in to-day already walks to-morrow.”

COLEBRIDGE.

I NEVER remember my dear mamma to have been any other than ill. I was too full of love's pains and pleasures not to see that time weakened her; that nothing healed her; while the limited sphere of my kingdom of love doubled such feelings, already too strong. Within my kingdom of home grew this foreboding—her sufferings were drawing to a close, because her life-pulse was visibly weakening. And I, the queen, was powerless to resist the doom. Such was the

state of my kingdom on this my tenth birthday. With all the will and energy to be a vigilant ruler, all the love and wish to be one worthy, full of high resolves and unselfish thoughts, yet did that one sad spot in my kingdom bring before me the prospect of a lonely, desolate, dependant, existence of ten years to come: the reverse of the last, when queen of a loving household. The contrast, though but dimly guessed at, appalled me. Yet, amid the struggle of passionate wild sorrow, still would I be a queen, queen over myself.

But see! life has woke up in my kingdom, mine for a tenure so uncertain. Feathery wreaths of smoke float upwards into the blue space, at first light and dreamy, but already becoming dark with the soil of work.

Now mamma's fire is lit. Old Anne will shortly draw up the window blinds, and Moss is already waiting to wheel papa into his dressing room. Papa has only one leg, and Moss was with him in the battle, when he lost the other. Papa often tells me the whole story, and always ends with

saying, "But for you, my old Moss, I should have left both legs behind." Then Moss always answers, "Never, yer honour; no ways would that have been allowed." Often papa is very ill, even worse than mamma; and it is his wound that makes him so. But the blinds are up. I can see Moss wheeling the chair. Now mamma says to Anne, "How is my pet this morning, Anne?" just as papa says to Moss, "Well, Moss, have you seen my darling?"

And this pet, this darling is seated in her green throne, crying to God on her tenth birthday with all the fervour of her childish heart, "Leave me not fatherless, motherless."

How the time has flown, absorbed in these sad thoughts. They must not see the traces of these tears. Papa is already dressed, and down stairs; for awhile he is always left alone with his God and his Bible, while Moss prepares the breakfast table. That is done, and he is now looking out of the open window, peering for me to come and make the tea.

" Ah ! Moss, Moss, never yet have you discovered my hiding-place, because I know you will tell papa that I am in danger of my life, clambering up so high. Now he becomes vexed. No doubt the water is at boiling pitch, and if the tea is not made within five minutes, Moss's good humour will vanish for the day. Here he is out of the door. I must scramble down, now that his back is turned. Ah ! he has eyes behind him, he catches me in his arms as I swing down by the last branch. And while I make the tea, and he wheels papa in, I hear him say, ' She has nine lives, she is a kitten, nothing will kill her.' "

" My pet," says papa, clasping me close, as I kiss him once, twice, a dozen times. " Though so little, we must remember, Moss, she is a great woman to-day, ten years old."

" But has she nine lives, yer honour ? Yesterday, the pony ran away with her, and I found them both in the brook, she laughing. And to-day, yer honour, but now, she ran down the

branches of the great beech tree like a squirrel, and would have sprung off, but that I caught her—”

“ Darling, you must not be rash,” said papa; “ if an accident should happen to you, what would mamma do ? ”

“ And mamma said yesterday what would papa do,” I answered laughingly.

“ Ah, what indeed ? ” said dear papa.

“ His honour must have his breakfast, miss ; have done kissing.”

Moss took many liberties with me. Perhaps, but for his blunt truths, and homely remarks, I might have been spoilt.

So I pour out the tea, hand papa his, and get mamma’s ready for old Anne to take up. I never remember seeing mamma at breakfast.

After the meal was over, I usually went through my lessons for the day, with papa, but now he said, “ Moss, draw me under the great beech-tree. I wish to see the bower wherein my pet hides herself.”

So I showed papa the manner in which I scrambled up into my throne. And I told him how the sun was nearly before me. And then I confided to him my wish to be a queen, and how I had constituted myself one, and of what I considered my kingdom to be composed.

Then papa was pleased. And he gave me his own experience of the rule in his kingdom ; and he drew aside from before my heart, the curtain of childish romancing, laying before me the high and solemn duties that devolved upon me. The incessant ward and watch I must keep against enemies—such as weeds of envy and discontent, flatterers, soothers, deceivers. That I must trust alone to the one Councillor, the Great Giver of Life, placed in the heart of every kingdom he established ; and whose unerring judgment poured itself forth in one continuous stream of help and advice. Papa said a great deal. It seemed to me, he wished me to learn to rely upon God, my conscience, and myself. Then we heard with surprise mamma was in the

drawing-room. She whispered prayers over me, as she clasped me close. And when I looked up into those soft violet eyes, there were tears in them. I knew she was thinking how many more of my birthdays she should see.

Mamma was very beautiful. Her features were the most delicate and faultless I ever saw. But for the pink transparent nostril, one would have deemed her nose cut with the rarest art of a sculptor out of marble, so delicate, it must have come from the quarries of Eden. No shade of colour had I ever seen in her cheek, but her lips were always red; and her eyes, though blue, intensely dark. This was caused by fever, I knew, for when she suffered most, most vivid did the colours glow. The lace of her cap was not more delicate or soft than her skin, and as she lay on her sofa, she was like a fair fragile lily, that one feared to touch with a rough hand, or breathe on with aught, but the soft, warm breath of love and gentleness.

"Moss is at his old story, my love," said

papa, kissing mamma's hand, as if it was a rose-leaf, and might be hurt or bruised in the act. He could not bend over to kiss her cheek, neither could she do the same by him. So I was their messenger, and carried their love-tokens from one to the other ; and had kisses of my own as a reward.

" More hair-breadth escapes of our darling ?" asked mamma, smiling.

" Yes ; if you hear that she flew down from the topmost branch of the large beech tree, without wings, you must not be surprised."

" I am surprised at nothing," said mamma. " But we know if she survived the peril of that storm at her birth, she is born for no common fate."

" So you always say, mamma," answered my father. " And I must agree with you.—You bore a charmed life then, little one, for some wise purpose."

" How, papa ?" I asked.

We will get mamma to tell us the whole story, as a birth-day treat."

"Willingly," answered mamma. "I have long wished her to know the events of her birth. It seems to me her life was not so strangely preserved, but for some high purpose."

"To be a queen!" whispered papa to me.

"And," continued mamma, sighing, "we know not for how long, my husband——"

"Ah! hush," said papa, shuddering, "damp not this day by aught melancholy."

"But we ought to prepare her, Roland," faltered my mother.

My father buried his face in his hands.

"If God takes you and papa to heaven, take me also," I exclaimed in agony.

"The child defines, husband. God has spoken to her.—Nellie, listen to your mother's story."

CHAPTER III.

“ And living hills of water
Sweep up as the storm-wind calls ;
Here a black gulf is gaping,
And there a white tower falls.

“ And sounds of sickness and wailing
From the depths of the cabin come.
I keep a firm hold of the bulwarks,
And wish I was at home.”

HEINE—*Leland's translation.*

“ My darling, sit by my side,” said mamma,
“ while I tell you the reason old Moss thinks
you bear a charmed life. You know you were
born at sea.”

“ Yes, mamma.”

“ Your father was ordered to join his regi-
ment at the Cape. He did not wish me to

accompany him, until such times that I could hold my little child safe within my arms. But, Nellie, as your fate is, such was mine. I had no relations, neither father nor mother——”

“Mamma!” I exclaimed: with one arm I clasped her, and stretched out my other hand to papa. “Had I not both, yet before me, living, loving?” Tears gushed from my eyes.

“Forgive me, child. Nay, weep not thus, sweet Nell, God is thy father, mother—all to thee! In mercy, He foreshadows to you, the removal of your earthly parents, only to prove the boundless store of good He holdeth yet for you. Comfort her, Roland.”

She paused, exhausted.

I calmed my sobs on the instant; the tears went back into my heart.

“And so, papa, mamma, would go?” I asked in a firm voice.

“Yes, love,” she said; “she should be so desolate, and withal she looked so piteous and forlorn, that (with some misgivings indeed), we

sailed together. I ought, perhaps, to have been more firm in my decision : transports in those days were scarcely fit for cattle, much less for delicate ladies.

“ But, Roland, thanks to your care,” interrupted mamma, “ we did very well : I enjoyed the voyage. Even over the rough waves of Biscay, we had fair and gentle usage. And late one evening we heard the happy tidings that we were in Algoa Bay, and the next day should land. I went on deck, to catch a glimpse of this promised land—that was to be the birth place of my child. Though I was assured it was almost possible to throw a biscuit on shore, yet was it too dark to discern ought. We busied ourselves, therefore, in preparations, and as, late at night, I laid down in my berth, joyfully thinking it was for the last time, a hollow, sweeping wind rocked the vessel to and fro. In my first sleep, I was awakened by the heaving up of the anchor—all the noise, hurry, and turmoil attendant on a gale of wind.”

"Yes, Nell," continued my father, taking advantage of my mother's pause; "long ere daylight we had left that dangerous anchorage, and had gone out to sea for safety: and now, as I looked round me, mid the spray and the storm, not a token of land was to be seen. The gale increased to a hurricane. I made what arrangements I could for the comfort and welfare of the troops under my command, as it became necessary to batten down the hatchways. The heavily laden transport shipped seas that threatened to swamp us. I then went to your mother; already had she been thrown more than once, with violence, from her berth. She was too weak to hold on. Lashing myself to a beam that went through our cabin, I clasped her close in my arms, and thus, at intervals, she gained some rest. Moss placed himself within hail, and now and then, during the weary four and twenty hours, brought us nourishment as he best could."

"And yet, my child," continued mamma

" nothing availed of all your father's care. In the very height of the storm, at its very worst, you were born, Nellie, a little untimely blossom. The rough doctor belonging to the troops came at my need, and was as kind as his nature permitted. He rolled you, as well as he could, in cotton and wadding, and placed you in a drawer, shut all but an inch. Then taking stout sail-cloth, he nailed strips of it round and over me; so that I was swathed up in my berth, much as if it had been my coffin. The storm, he declared, was too violent to permit him to do more for my comfort ; I was secured from violent harm, and ' an hour or so more of this weather,' I heard him say, to your agonised father, " will make it a matter of no moment how they both fare.' "

" I lay for the next three hours, my child, calm, peaceful, and happy, while the uproar of the elements seemed more wild than ever. There was something soothing to me, in the thought, that should it please God to make the

raging waters our grave, the struggle between life and death would be brief. We should all go together; one family, one household—the father, mother, and little stranger child, not yet kissed or blessed, not even seen—would at once, in one hour, yield up their lives together.

“ Towards sun-down there was a lull, and I could hear the good doctor struggling his precarious way towards my cabin ; as I lay, my head so close to the partition, I could hear him saying ‘ Life or death reigns below ; we must see after the poor mother and give her some nourishment, sir, and we must remove the child ; it is dead ere this.’ Thus he spoke of my child ; my little child whose voice I had never heard, whose face I had never seen. Perhaps it was this, which made me feel a species of weak joy that my little one had escaped any further rough usage from the stormy world into which it had been so abruptly ushered.

“ Roland gave me the food prepared by the doctor ; and I whispered to him, that I hoped

the poor little life had been recalled ; that I so little felt I was a mother, I should have no regret. At this moment, the doctor, with some difficulty, opened the drawer in which you had been laid. High above the roar of the sea, the rattling of the chains, the hoarse cries of the sailors, rose your little voice, my child. I uttered a cry, I stretched out my arms, all the mother gushed into my heart, and I felt that my life was bound up in that little feeble one."

" Your voice was not musical, my darling," interrupted my father. " I shall never forget the amazement of old Blaize, as he looked at you, squalling loudly. Then, seizing the basin of gruel, from which I was feeding your mother, he dipped a bit of sponge into it, and held the dripping morsel to your mouth. You clutched it eagerly, and loudly screamed for more if it was withdrawn. ' By Jove ! ' exclaimed he, quite red with excitement and pleasure, ' this is the most plucky little wretch I ever saw. Save its life, I must, if I dry-nurse it

myself. There now, you greedy little thing, you have had enough for the present. If you are good, and don't die, you shall have some arrow-root next time.' Then, carefully covering you up again, he half-closed the drawer, saying 'I shall never forgive myself if that child dies.' Though the violence of the storm abated, yet were we driven for three weeks, tempest-tost, on the ocean, during which your mother never was able to rise once, but remained lashed down to her berth."

CHAPTER IV.

“Send down thy winged angel, God,
Amidst this night so wild,
And bid him come, where now we watch,
And breathe upon our child.”

BARRY CORNWALL.

“MEANTIME,” continued my father, “Dr. Blaize left your mother almost wholly to my care; he devoted himself to you. Every day he caused himself to be lashed to two stout sailors. Then, either Moss or myself brought him the precious bundle, swathed in wadding, out of the drawer. With infinite care and tenderness, this rough old fellow would take advantage of favourable lulls, in wind or sea, and dip you five or six times in a bucket of warm sea

water. Then giving you a swing or two in the air to dry you, for none dare touch so fragile a being with a towel, he would again roll you in wadding, and place you within your drawer. Every two hours he fed you with his sponge dipped in arrowroot or gruel, which he declared you relished with as much *goût* as an alderman did turtle.

"I was so much occupied with the care of your mother, little one, that your existence was scarcely thought of by me; and I had reason for my fears regarding her health. From that day to this, Nell, your mother's foot has never touched the ground."

"But, dear husband, if God had not lulled the storm and calmed the tempest, I should not have had these latter years of happiness with you."

"True, wife, I thank God, I have ever done so, I trust, I hope, with all due reverence and submission. And never do I remember to have experienced this feeling so greatly, in such true

force, as when the sun arose, bright and beaming, after that three weeks of agony and suffering.

"‘Thank God for such a sight,’ said I to Blaize, as I met him on deck.

“‘Thank God, say I,’ he answered ; ‘I must bring my baby up to see the sun, plucky little fellow, and he shall have some clothes on, as a treat, if the sea goes down.’

“‘Did you not tell me it was a girl?’ I asked.

“‘To be sure, so it is, worse luck, for a braver little man I never saw.’

“‘I wish you would come down and see my wife ; she is so weak.’

“‘No doubt, no doubt, we must have her up on deck to breath a little fresh air. To think of that little chap living so well and hearty, in a drawer for three weeks. It’s wonderful, marvellous ! If I die King of Oude, I’ll leave him heir apparent.’

“In fact, Dr. Blaize could think and talk of nothing but his baby.

" He wanted Moss to try and dress you, but he prudently declined. Then he requested a fine handsome boy of twelve years of age, who was son to one of the officers accompanying me, to constitute himself your nurse.

" ' I'll what nurses call dandle the little thing if you wish it doctor ; but as for dressing it, excuse me, I can hardly dress myself in this weather.'

" ' Pooh, man ! what a cockney you must be. During the whole of this gale I have shaved myself clean every morning.'

" ' That may be, but if you choose to endanger your own nose, it needs not that I try to perform an act that would be difficult under any circumstances.'

" At last, Nellie, having carried your mother on deck, she took in her arms, for the first time, her little child, and with feminine motherly hands you were properly clothed and tendered.

" Then with the pride and air of a conquering monarch, Blaize, fearful of touching you himself,

placed you in young Forest's arms, and holding him fast in his turn, for fear of any unlucky lurch of the ship, you were paraded to the admiring eyes of all the crew as well as troops.

"Look at my baby, did you ever see such a fellow? lived for three weeks in a drawer, and yet stares after the sun in that fashion. Now, if this child does not grow up a fine man, I'll never forgive it."

"Mrs. Offley calls it she," remarked young Forest.

"By the Lord, so it is; what a temper it will have."

"During the time we remained on board, Blaize's baby became an object of interest to all. The sailors immediately invested it with the marks of superstition, and the wind might blow, and the waves war, the charmed life of their baby would preserve their ship from sinking. It was deemed an honour to be allowed to hold it for a moment, to make its gruel, to do anything for it, while its many and increasing ac-

compliments were the theme of every tongue. The instinct with which it would grasp the sponge, though only filled with the water intended to wash the innocent little face, 'showed,' remarked Blaize, in a glow of delight, 'what a wonderful intelligent child it was, to discern its first mother.'

"Thus, Nellie, though your parents did not appreciate you then, a whole ship's company and a body of troops were your devoted admirers. To say nothing of young Forest, who would walk about the deck with you in his arms by the hour together."

"And when were you wounded, papa?" I asked.

"About nine months afterwards, darling; in a skirmish with the Kaffirs I lost my leg, and should have lost my life also, but for Moss. After three months' intense suffering, I was brought down to the 'Cape,' and saw your mother and you for the first time since we landed. For she was too ill, and you too young,

to follow me to camp. Though we had a sore difficulty in persuading Blaize to leave his baby behind—your mother was then only slowly recovering, but anxiety about me, and the inability to nurse me, caused a relapse. For many weeks we lay in adjoining rooms, divided only by a slight partition, unable to assist each other ; yet we blessed God that but a wall divided us, and that He had given us a little tiny messenger to communicate with each other. You soon learnt to run alone, and even before you could speak, were sufficiently intelligent to exchange kisses and notes between us—a little fair, white child, with bright red curls."

"No, not red," interrupted mamma, "chesnut coloured are these curls."

"They may be so now," answered papa, "but not then."

"And when did we come home?" I asked.

"You were three years old, Nellie, when we again encountered the perils of a sea-voyage. I but waited to see old Blaize to know if it

would be possible for me ever to join my regiment. Sorely against his will he decided that I must sell out. He could not bear to lose his baby, and blubbered like any old nurse as you put your little fat arms round his neck, and kissed his great rough face."

"I think I remember the parting," I said, "but I have never seen him since, papa."

"No, child, we returned home, our voyage was favourable and quick. I sold my commission, and with the money bought this little cottage. My pension, and your mother's fortune have been riches enough for us, so that we could lay up some money for you. We have spent eight happy quiet years, with no other sorrow than periodical pain, until now ; and now—" a pause. The silence hung upon us, as the pressure of deepening waters.

CHAPTER V.

“ The Lord is great and good, and is our God.
There needeth not a word, but only these
‘ Our God is good, our God is great.’ ‘ Tis well.”

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

“ My child,” said my mother, at last, drawing me closer to her, “ God has been very good to us. Your father and I have never been separated but that one year at the Cape; and, as a last act of mercy, he will take us together to himself.”

A low cry escaped me involuntarily.

“ We have but one sorrow, namely, that we leave our little darling behind us. But the good God, who preserved her life so wonderfully has done it for some wise purpose, doubtless. And

when our child has fulfilled her destiny, then shall we be permitted once more to behold her."

"Papa, mamma, take me with you. I shall be so lonely—so desolate!" Very loud and bitter was my cry. They lifted up their voices, and wept with me.

So my grief began to over-master me. The little kingdom within my heart was being surcharged and overwhelmed with the flood of it.

"Child, look at your mother," said papa, "bear bravely, for her sake, your lot, that you may keep her with you, as long as God permits, peaceful and serene."

There was a stir within me, a soft bound of will and energy in my kingdom, that seemed to tell me I might yet rely on it. The waters of grief had not wholly destroyed it.

"Mamma, how long?" I gasped.

"It is hard to say, my best, most precious one, which is nearest death, your father or myself. But he comes not the less surely, and it

is mercifully withhelden from us, which is to mourn the other, though but a short space."

"We are willing to go, Nellie," said my father, taking me in his loving arms, "for our lives here below are laden with pain and sickness. But not willing to part from you. Therefore, knowing what a cheerful, loving heart God has given our darling, we have prepared you thus, that you may aid us to bear the parting bravely."

"Papa, papa, I cannot ! I must go with you. I will not stay alone ; it is too much." A deadly pallor stole over my mother's. Again the soft stir of reproof moved my heart, half suffocating it with remorse as she fell back in one of the fearful fits of agony that made death itself seem welcome. It was but seldom that I was permitted to remain with her at such periods. But this time I bared the contracted brow, lifting up the braids of hair, heavy with the damp of pain. I poured out the cool restoratives, apply-

ing them with quick and steady fingers. I measured out the drops of the soothing draught, and felt how great the reward for this victory over myself—between every spasm my mother smiled on me.

But the fit was long and severe. During its influence, many times did I say to myself—“Would to God my mother was freed from this agony. Would to God I could suffer for thee, mother. ‘Twere better thou wert safe in Abraham’s bosom.” But each time I spoke thus to myself, each time I could not but add in my innermost heart—“And I with thee.”

Papa was always removed when mamma suffered from these attacks. He was unable to bear the sight, knowing he could not help her. Once he had endangered his own life in the effort to support her; his wounds bursting out afresh; so that it was many months ere he recovered the shock.

At the end of an hour, the composing draught began to over-master the disease, and my mother

sank into the deep sleep of exhaustion that resembles death so closely.

I went to seek poor papa. He opened his arms for me, and I nestled into my usual place, almost hidden in that kind embrace ; for I was very little, and papa very tall and large, though wasted by pain and sickness.

It seemed strange that two beings so bitterly afflicted with the heaviest of human calamities, should have belonging to them a child so full of health, activity, and energy. I mourned that I was not as they were—that I felt so redundant in strength and bloom—so charmed, as it were, against sickness and accidents—so far, in short, from death.

“ Papa,” I asked, at last, after a long silence, “ must you both leave your poor little child ?”

“ It may not be so, dear, but it is probable. Neither you nor I can disguise, from each other that each week sees your mother more fragile—more pale. Long ago, her disease was pronounced mortal, though lingering. Indeed, we owe it to

her pious fortitude, her calm submission, that we have kept her so long. The murmurings of an impatient or angry spirit would have tempted a less loving heart to use remedies that, while they eased her, yet carried their bane so surely for every hour of ease thus bought, that we might have lost her years ago. As regards my sufferings, Nellie, if I had no heart, if I was made of stone, I might live on. But such is the nature of one wound, apparently, the slightest I received, that on the least emotion, there arises a pain, a danger, which I cannot explain to you ; but it may, with its first pang, end my life ; therefore it seems to me probable, if I saw my loved one suffer, if a shock should suddenly burst upon me,—you know how I love her, child,—so I have it in my heart, in the hour that she dies, my soul will also be required of me ; and but for my Nellie, I should thank God for such mercy."

" But, papa, I will watch, guard, love you ! Nothing shall occur to shock or hurt you. Oh, live for me !"

"Believe me, child, while you live, I have a tie to earth so strong, that not even your mother's departure from it would cause me to break it. We know, that to her, though leaving her child behind, the change will be so blessed, we ought not mourn her."

"True, papa, even in this very hour, I prayed God to take her to Abraham's bosom."

"If it is God's will, I may live yet many years, and see my darling grow into a woman. Then I can deliver her into the care of a young, strong, and loving heart, who will enable me to carry glad tidings to our beloved angel of the motherless child left to my care. But it is in expectation of the other event that I ask my Nellie to dismiss her child's heart, and listen to me, as she would wish to listen to one whose words may be heard no more."

"I listen, papa."

"If it should please God, my child, that we are both to leave you, I have appointed you three guardians. One is your mother's brother, your

uncle Berrington : you know him for a kind-hearted, conscientious man. But in case his large family renders it inconvenient for him to give a home to my little lonely one, I have named the son of a brother officer as your second guardian. He is the young boy who acted nurse to my Nellie, under old Blaize's superintendence, and who has gradually become a character admired and loved by every one. I would have named, my dear friend, his father ; but he, alas, is dead. The son, however, even in the short time that I knew him, so won upon me by his good qualities, that I could only compare him to the knights of old, so imbued was he with the high honour and courage of an English gentleman. I am the more induced to name him as your guardian, because he has lately married the third person, whom we have mentioned as a protector. She is a connexion, and was a friend, of your mother's. I am bound to confess that young Forest has not shewn that judgment in his marriage I

should have expected: yet, as it relieves us from a great embarrassment, I ought to say nothing; and the difference in their ages only affects themselves. He, I know, will be kind to you; while his wife, Lady Maria, will ever treat you with consideration, if only for the blood you bear in your veins."

CHAPTER VI.

“Take me, mother earth, to thy cold breast,
And fold me there in everlasting rest !
The long day is o'er,
I am weary, I would sleep.”—MRS. JAMIESON.

“THUS, Nellie, with many prayers to God, we have made the best earthly arrangements we could for our child. In the matter of this world's goods you will not have much for luxuries or temptations, but quite sufficient for moderate wants ; and above all, for rendering you independent and beyond the humiliating taint of a cold and scanty charity. With whomsoever you live the fixed sum of three hundred pounds a year will be paid, out of which you will be given a certain yearly allowance for your own

private use. Upon coming of age, your whole fortune will be made over to you, which amounts to a sum so moderate, my Nellie need never fear being sought in marriage for her wealth, and yet poverty (with prudence), will be far from her. I tell her all these things."

"But, papa, papa, I shall be so lonely, so desolate."

"With the God of the fatherless above her, with the spirits of her parents about her, with the courage and high heart of the soul within her, my child will do her work in the world well and bravely; religion and truth her staff and support. But how is this?" continued my loving father. "The queen of this little kingdom must be absent. Surely she has not fled at the first blow? A queen rules best in adversity; a true loyal queen never leaves her kingdom bare and helpless."

It would not do. The proud, exulting queen of the morning was drowned in a deluge of woe; the little kingdom was for a time over-

thrown ; and as I pined and mourned in sorrow and fear, even Moss began to think my charmed life was fading with that of my parents.

But God was very good to me. The blow came softly, gently—with the soothing conviction that what was loss to me, was gain to them.

They spoke to me so constantly of the approaching event, that I became familiar with death, as with a brother. They dwelt upon their release as a desired and happy event, until I too prayed God to make them happy, and forgot my own desolate condition. Many conversations they had upon my future acts, and many gentle sweet lectures they gave me upon so comporting myself, that I might gain the love and praise of parents, from those who were neither kith nor kin to me. Above all, I was to keep within me a truthful trustful heart, ever to hold the one purpose within my view, namely—to do my duty in whatever state God placed me.

Now, in this distant period of time, I recall these conversations, and fancy myself again a

child, treasuring up every word that fell from lips so loved ; as one who well knew the blessing was about to be withdrawn. The effort to apply and render effective their advice and maxims, might have imparted at this period a habit of thinking and reasoning not usual for heedless childhood. And I passed the next two years of my life more in the school of mental duties, solemn thoughts, unwearied cries to heaven, than the happy, flowery life of a child changing into girlhood.

The sword of grief and bereavement hanging over my head, made me taste but rarely unmitigated enjoyment. The scenes of pain and mortal agony led me to look on life as Isaac did, just, too, as I was entering its fairest phases ; so that now, in these my declining years, I have more of youth and elasticity in my spirit than at that period. Wearied and sick at heart, I set out on my world's work fearful and lonely. Now my work is nearly done,—without presumption may I take it as an omen of good, that I pass on my

way now, joyful and serene, because I have remembered so faithfully the dying words of my parents ; because I knew on whom to trust ; because I rested not on my own arm ; because I tried, with God's help, to rule my little kingdom rightly. One day, (I was two days past twelve years old), papa lay upon a mound of newly-mown grass, that Moss had spread for him. He had not been so merry as his wont, ever since my birthday, and I sat on a little seat at a distance, watching him. He sighed heavily once or twice, and by the motion of his hands, and the expression of his face, I could judge that he was praying. As he prayed, I could see the drops of mortal pain gathering on his brow, through the earnestness of his prayer.

Even as I watched, he sank back, fainting. I ran to him, calling loudly for Moss. As the old man lifted him up (light was the burden to what it ought to have been), papa said, "Moss, take me to her, this is death, my summons comes first."

"No, no!" cried a voice at my side.

Ah! sight of wonders, my mother! she who had not put her foot out to the ground for twelve long years—she stood before us, like a quivering broken lily; a strange light in her eyes, a rushing, fluttering colour in her cheek.

"You called, Roland; you called me," she said.

Even as she spoke, her slight form wavered; I clasped her tight, but she glided from my arms, and sunk down, laying across papa. As he made a strong effort, and lifted up her face to his, so did a dark stream of blood pour from his lips, staining her white face and dress. They were both carried in after a brief space, and which died first, none of us three terror-stricken mourners could tell.

Old Anne could not say how my mother rose and left her couch; unless, her mortal spirit already fled, she had come as an angel just to receive her Roland's last breath. She had heard a cry, as if one loving heart called another, and

then the long-recumbent, helpless wife arose, and, with a gliding motion, stood by her husband, as I have said, old Anne following in awe.

They had rightly judged that neither could survive the other. The manner of their life, the seclusion in which they lived, the scant measure of their enjoyments, had all combined to cement a love and sympathy between their natures, that even death could not conquer. Not the cries of their desolate child penetrated hearts so true to each other, though she called wildly for one more word—one single token of love. They were both buried together, in one grave, almost as they died ; for it had been found scarcely possible to unclose my mother from my father's clasp. I never left their side until the grave received them ; and with sad, silent tears I saw them placed away out of my sight.

My uncle Berrington wished to take me home with him. But I had always been so quiet and grave, old Anne would not, she said, let me go

at once into the company of noisy, healthy childhood.

"Leave her with me, sir," she asked, "for a month, while you are settling her affairs and letting the cottage. She will recover soonest alone, and near her parents' grave."

So he acquiesced; and in that quiet time I learnt to lay my burden on the Lord; and was ready, when he came again, to encounter my first entrance into a real world.

Moss went to the north, to see his relations, ere he settled his future plans.

Old Anne hired a cottage near ours. "I cannot live out of sight of the grave," said she.

CHAPTER VII.

“Enough to sorrow you have given :
The purposes of Wisdom ask no more.
Be wise and cheerful !”—WORDSWORTH.

DURING the month that I lived with Anne and Moss, they had poured into my ears many homely maxims.

“ You have never had any playfellows, Miss and you don’t know what aggravating things children are. Not but what it will be good for you mixing with young things. You’re very old-fashioned, and that’s God’s truth.”

“ Mrs. Anne, ye would not have my young eddy different from what she is.”

Moss had transferred to me the respect and

deference he had been accustomed to give his master and commanding officer.

"Hoot! Moss, what can ye tell a young lady should be like? Mind me now, Miss. Fashious as children is, ye'll find, as ye wend on in the world, men and women are sore like bairns in their ways of going on. It is but upon times we are let to see angels on earth, such as we have just lost. And the remembrance of them must aye warn ye to think of yer luck in living with them these twelve years."

"And I shall see them again, never to part."

"Aye, if ye do yer duty and mind what I tell ye."

"His Honour gave the word of command ere he left—'twill be obeyed," said Moss, with a sententious, angry dignity.

I put my hand into his.

"What do you think of children, old Moss?"

He seemed puzzled by my question—so old Anne took advantage of his delay in answering to go on with her lecture.

“ Children will always be children, and very aggravating. You must keep your temper, Miss, and never speak while you feel angry.”

“ If any children forget what is due to my young lady, I obey the word of command—I come to her assistance.”

“ Word of command indeed! Yer in yer dotage, old man. There is no talking sense, Miss, while he is by, so I’ll e’en wait to give ye yer lectures when he is at his work.”

As Anne never lost an opportunity of imparting these lectures, and they all had the same text, “that children were very aggravating,” and sang the same song, “that I was to keep my temper,” it may be imagined a little flutter agitated my heart, as I saw the number of children who crowded to meet me, as I alighted at my uncle’s door.

I endeavoured, as Anne had desired me, to be calm, and “hold my own,” by which expression, I learnt, she meant I was to be dignified. I liked, however, the warm kisses that they gave

me, and was not disposed to quarrel with the tardy welcome of my uncle and the somewhat querulous one of my aunt. With such tribes of children, I did not wonder that I might be felt in the way; and as to love, I did not care to have it at present, for I had none to give in return.

So I fell asleep in my new home, not unhappy, but resolute to do my best, and I asked God and my parents to bless my endeavours.

For some days I was in, I must grant, a whirl. Strange appeared to me the oddities, whims, tempers, and humours of my cousins. I thought we were in Phanor's palace, where human nature was laid all bare to the naked eye, without any individual being able to disguise his natural disposition.

My eldest cousin was haughty and despotic, with a rash temper and biting tongue—but so generous withal, so magnanimous in her avowal of wrong, so unselfish in her very acts of wrath, I liked and admired her. She did not seem to

me to have anything mean in her composition. Like a haughty young spirit, she clashed against anything that savoured of wrong, with violence certainly and unnecessary wrath, but with such a resolute determination, that envy, falsehood, and hypocrisy fled abashed before her.

Her next sister, Georgina, was one of those active, energetic characters who find it necessary to do everybody's business but their own: she was clever and quick, and had she used these talents to acquire knowledge, she would have benefited herself as much as others. For she would have left them alone. I had not been three days in the house, before the whole of my worldly possessions had been thoroughly investigated. A great deal of vehement advice was given me, as to the arranging and placing of them, while I underwent a strict examination as to my late life and habits, with comments of approbation or the reverse, given without reserve or delicacy.

I was not disposed to be ill-tempered with

her, adhering as well as I could to old Anne's advice, to say nothing while I was angry. I was rewarded for my forbearance, as a new object of interest withdrew her attention from me.

Her father had received a letter, which (unlike the usual habit of the family, read aloud or left lying about,) was silently pored over and then buttoned up safe in his pocket. She might have lost sight of this unusual circumstance, but her father desired her mother's presence in his private study, and as the door shut upon them, she saw him drawing the mysterious letter from his pocket.

This caused her energies to be wholly employed in discovering the secret; so that I became no longer an object of interest. As I do not remember whether she was successful or not, I conclude she found other matters on which to interest herself, as she was never either quiet or idle.

However, if a thing was to be done, and done quickly and well, Georgina was the person em-

ployed: thus proving to me, another of old Anne's sayings, "None are so bad, but they have some virtue, and perhaps what you have not." I, therefore, bore patiently the worry she sometimes occasioned me, all the more from feeling I never would have troubled myself about others as she did.

Between her and her eldest sister, there was incessant war. The pain and amazement this caused me, can only be realised by those who, having passed a lonely childhood, are unaccustomed to the jars and discord of family circles. Or those, who still more like me, never heard so much as an angry expression.

There are people who may, perhaps, advocate that such scenes and struggles are not without their use; and domestic turmoils are but so much training for the wider area of the world. Forbearance and experience are thus learnt in the nursery. But to me, it has ever seemed that each quarrel brought forth more ill-will, and a deterioration of character ensued. Georgina,

after each conflict, was more obstinate, while Isabel's temper was blown into a gust with half a word. At first, I made rash attempts to mediate and soothe, the unwonted sight calling forth the tears, that seldom flowed even on the greatest occasions.

Isabel at sight of them wiped my tears, shook me, called me a little fool, went out of the room with the air of a queen and the manner of a hoyden, banging the door: while Georgina said, with triumph, "There, I think I have settled her this time."

Afterwards I learnt how useless was any sorrow in the matter, for between whiles they were as loving and friendly as the rest of their sisters.

The remainder of the feminine portion of the family were but counterparts of these two, all much younger; various brothers, now at school or elsewhere, filled up the gaps between them.

My uncle was quick and clever in his way; fond of literature and theories, the prevailing reign of each influencing the whole family.

My aunt liked gossip. I remember when she went to Dr. Davies for advice about her baby, who had had a convulsion fit, she stood for half-an-hour, with the remedy in her hand, listening to the particulars of an interesting case.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ The full sum of me
Is sum of something : which, to term in gross,
Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised ;
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn ; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull, but she can learn.”

SHAKESPEARE.

I STAYED two years with my uncle, and became fourteen years old. I liked him well. It was a diversion in our usual lives, to be under the influence of one of his theories, whether it advocated the universal inhalement of fresh air, or the absolute necessity of a strict attention to one line of study. The mode of study underwent various changes. Sometimes we were to

imbibe all we learnt from speech ; adopting one subject, arguing and discoursing thereon. This was not without its advantages. Isabel's quick and ready intellect was about a match for Georgina's application and perseverance, while as my uncle was pleased to say, the simple appreciation of right and wrong was equally praiseworthy on my part.

Again, we were to write everything, even the notes of our music. This was to exercise us in the matter of retentive memories. Here Georgina surpassed us both. Isabel's talents were quick and flashing ; mine, imaginative and discussive. She adopted an idea, a thought, and put it down in her own strong and somewhat quaint language. I lost my subject in the world of thought, to which it gave rise. And if it was music, I could dream of airs, and play them, but notes were of little use to me.

To be sure, at times we were put to some inconvenience and trouble. Children are more subservient of habits than those whose contact

with the world obliges them to conform to the different ways of the different people they may chance to meet.

We could not alter our ideas, or follow his plans as quickly as he wished. Sometimes also he was not judicious in the theory he adopted. I remember, in the reign of fresh air, and desired hardihood, we ended the theory and trial together, by all taking to our beds, with coughs and colds. These not only lasted through the winter, but were too severe to risk the practice of a medical theory in curing them.

It may readily be supposed that I had in this large family and changing scenes of life ample opportunity to put in practice the rules and maxims inculcated by my parents. I do not know if I was loveable by nature. I think not. It seemed to me that love and all such strong feelings had gone out of my heart into their grave, and in the stead was a firm desire to win my way to Heaven and them. This idea was the absorbing thought,

the ruling desire of my life ; so that the childish sins and tempers of my cousins neither infected or disturbed me.

My aunt did not love me much. She was very kind, when I was by. But she never was unkind to any thing or any one by acts, though she was often unjust in words. I thought she did not love me because she seemed to forget my existence if I was not present ; yet was I more attentive to her wishes than her two eldest daughters. At first I was inclined to grieve over this ; my parents had told me I might gain love, if I tried. But my aunt's love, I found, was not necessary to my happiness ; I felt if I had been as pretty as Isabel, I should have been "dear little Nell" to her, or as lively and amusing as Georgina, still higher in her favour. I was deficient in both qualities, and so was nothing. Nurse also was doubtful about liking me. I never was naughty, and did so much for myself, I was not troublesome, and I think she considered this aggravating. In fact, it took

me a long time to learn, that to be duly valued, you must make yourself felt in some way. I was nothing but a small morsel of humanity, bent upon being seen and heard as little as possible. It was not so much shyness, but the world was so new to me. I wanted to feel my way, and have a steady path to walk on, ere I ventured to do so, singly and alone.

I gained the character of being supine or stupid, because when my cousins quarrelled, I gazed on the scene, as a spectator might view the different phases of a tragedy, generally rather more horrified than interested. Yet my observations were not wholly useless, for I learnt the value of the “soft word that turneth awaywrath;” or the power of the little jest, (skilfully interposed), to make that nonsense which was assuming a serious aspect.

I had need to take up some position; for, being their constant companion, and nearly of their age, an arbitrator was often required by my cousins.

No lord chief justice ever studied to be impartial and truthful more than I did, and by degrees this fact gained me their respect. My uncle was a sociable man, and liked to have his neighbours and his neighbours' children constantly round him. He was fond of quoting Dr. Chambers' words,

"Write your name by kindness, forbearance, and mercy on the hearts of the people you come in contact with, year by year, and you will never be forgotten." And no one that I have met realised the practice of this more than he did.

On my fourteenth birth-day, though I had no leafy throne to repose in, I did not the less think over my position, and investigate the progress I had made towards the attainment of heaven.

I thought I had gained the love of my relations; and, though I was not clever or handsome, I was lively and good tempered, and was always considered as one certain to do what she could, if wanted. Besides my one ruling passion, the desire so to act that I might join my parents,

I had rather a wayward talent for music, that could not be confined to notes, and a love of modelling. These were my only gifts. Meantime I looked within, to see if I was profiting by the lessons I gathered from those around me. They were of use to me in the ruling of my kingdom in this way. When Isabel was under the influence of one of her gusts, strong were the rules and stern the measures taken to prevent my dominions being visited by a similar hurricane, because the fragile plants of forbearance and good temper were not yet sufficiently rooted to resist the attack. When she made atonement by frank and generous admission of error, I gathered the seeds of her words, and planted them deeply and strongly in a soil not only of good resolves but of common sense—putting near them the plants of experience and nobility of nature; by which I hoped to avoid the necessity of ever having to make such admissions, while the antidote for them should never be wanting.

From Georgy I gathered the fruits of industry and perseverance, carefully selecting those that belonged of right to me and my kingdom, while I abstained from touching others without leave or license. An acrimonious and biting herb of recrimination I could not bear, bringing in its company sharp words, not always true, yet ever bitter. I planted in my kingdom great stores of peace and soft words, but could not have among them my aunt's familiar, but somewhat too friendly interest in her neighbour's matters. Many stories, idle and untrue, fell upon the quick ears of Georgy with an effect her mother neither knew or could define, as she listened, with indolent satisfaction, to any one who would pour them forth for her amusement. And as the love grew upon her in greater and increasing eagerness, so did her perception of their worthlessness and impropriety lessen. Isabel only understood things by the judgment of her own heart, and thinking no wrong herself, escaped unscathed from the contamination of such gossip.

My uncle contributed also to enrich my little kingdom with experiences necessary to cope with the world in which I was about to plunge. If I liked the sincerity and fervour with which he carried out a theory, so did I perceive, with the quick instinct of a child's wit, that he was not always judicious in the time and method of proposing it. A little time spent in wisely consulting my aunt would have pleased her, occupied her mind, and given rather more of solidity and thought to his plans than was habitual to him. He would not have had to abandon some almost as soon as tried, or to give up others at a mortifying cost to himself. But he was so earnest and true, so thoroughly free from anything small or depressing, so frank, so exhilarating in his views of life and its duties, that existence became a charm beneath his roof, and nothing ungrateful or thankless could live with him. No matter the subject—let it be the weary toil of daily tasks, the turmoil of a domestic quarrel, the painful tale of a sudden and unfor-

seen death, the words that came from his lips were healthful and good. We sprang with fresh vigour to our tasks—we blushed at the meanness of a quarrel—we quailed not at the immediate presence of death. “Little Nellie,” said he, “how large your eyes grow and eager! Do you wish to die and leave us?”

“I do not fear death, uncle.”

“May you never do so, little child; but it is strange for one so young to have that wistful glance. Are you happy?”

“Yes, uncle, like the bird on a tree.”

“And you love God?”

“Could I live and not do so?”

“Good child! When your work is done, and done well, God will ‘send His gentlest angel down,’ and restore you to your parents. But you must wait, Nellie—‘abide in patience.’”

CHAPTER IX.

“ He most lives,
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.”
BAILEY.

“ I KNEW I must wait. Hardly was my business begun.

About this time came a letter from Lady Maria Forest, not only enquiring after me, her ward, but desiring my presence. I liked not the look of the letter. The characters of the handwriting did not please me ; the letters were small and half-formed, and a general species of scratchiness about the whole look of it, was unpleasant. Perhaps the pen was of the sort, spluttery, yet would not that have given an ungraceful twitch to the long-tailed letters. Perhaps I found that

love had again entered my heart, and I could not bear the thoughts of leaving Willow-wood, and all its inhabitants. I said nothing, however, while my aunt and uncle discussed the letter.

MR. B. I am glad they have at last thought of the child.

MRS. B. Yes, 'tis positively shameful the way in which Lady Maria has ignored her existence, and her own relation too. But I heard such a tale of her the other day——

MR. B. I shall be sorry to part with the child. Nellie, dear, you have grown into my heart.

MRS. B. She is as good a child as ever came into a house. Neither trouble or care ; so unlike that horrid girl the Blakeneys had left them, who——

MR. B. But, little Nellie, do you wish to go ? I put my hand into his for answer. " You can always return, child," quickly answering my mute appeal.

I felt certain he would decide I was to go, because at present his favourite theory was, that going from home and seeing the world was the truest and most proper mode of education. And in furtherance of it, some talk had taken place about sending Isabel to school.

MRS. B. Oh, yes, of course ; indeed, I should not wonder if she were soon sent back to us, if all the stories I have heard of Lady Maria are true. That last one was——

MR. B. If Isabel goes to school, they can travel together.

Whether my uncle did it on purpose or not, we never could discover ; but somehow my aunt advanced but little in one of her gossiping stories when he was by. My eyes brightened. I should not be completely torn from them all if I travelled with Isabel ; and she lived in the same town with me, though that town was London.

MR. B. Loving little heart ! Suppose now, Nell, you arrive at liking them more than you do us ?

GEORGY. Nellie loves no one, she only likes them.

ISABEL. Lady Maria has a daughter, Nellie dear.

MRS. B. About whom there is some most extraordinary—not to say scandal—

MR. B. She is older than either of you, my daughters. She will look upon Nellie as an interesting specimen of the genus, child. I hear Captain Forest is a wonder—a marvel—a phoenix!—

MRS. B. My dear Berrington, now you have hit it. I remember it all, he has to do with it, most shocking—

MR. B. Yes, it will be shocking to lose our little fireside fairy. Child, do not forget us; and when I see you again, may I look down into those clear eyes, and see truth dwelling in their depths.

So we were to go.

Indeed, it was good in some respects the sisters were to be separated. The love between

them was waxing small, under the irritating influence of passion on one side, and aggravation on the other.

"It's main lucky Miss Berrington is going with Miss Offley, or, my word, but peace would be unknown in this house!" said nurse. "Little missy keeps them together now."

Little Missy was my name in the nursery, given me by nurse for some private reason of her own. I could not deny I was little.

That evening, my uncle gave us a dissertation upon the advantages of mixing with the world, quoting Latin authors, Greek authors, maxims from the Holy Bible, examples from modern heroes.

As long as names and facts were mentioned by my uncle, my aunt listened attentively, adding her testimony of modern experience to the truth of ancient deeds; thus proving, old as the world was, man and his nature remained much the same.

But when my uncle proceeded to draw infer-

ences from his facts, and to dilate, after the manner of a sermon, into one, two, and three heads, my aunt's attention flagged, her head and eyelids drooped, her hands fell on her lap, and a gentle puff, such as a luxurious smoker of cigars might indulge in, to denote arriving at the seventh heaven, told us that my aunt, at least, had reached the land of dreams. That soft "puff, puff," to inspire my uncle, either because his flowing speech was not likely to be interrupted by an inappropriate remark, or that he was freed from a listener who would not quite appreciate his philanthropy.

" My children, in mixing with the world, it is not necessary for you only to see that which is unjust, wicked, degrading. Mark the upright man, behold the just, and ask yourselves why you may not be like them? If you remain at home, fearing that your virtue may be weak, your strength not equal to your temptations; your Lord's talent that he gave you is useless; you have buried it in the earth. But if you go

forth, remembering that every man is your neighbour, that you owe him neighbourly service, that you must use him, as he will use you : you labour in the Lord's vineyard, and will receive your hire. But you must be contented with your position ; you must not say to yourself—"I should do better if I had other companions, these are not to my taste !" you have no right to say so ; for all men are your neighbours ; and looking at them as such, there are few in which you cannot discern some quality that you may want. Besides, how exercise your virtues of forbearance, love, and kindness, if you have only those to associate with, who require nothing of the sort ? And what if you do meet the reprobate and wicked ? Can you not show them the lowness of virtue ? Can you not prove to them innocence and rectitude are as strong in their roots as vice and evil habits ? Why are the good to flee away from the bad ? Nay, let them rather mingle together. Happily the good may resist the bad. By God's pleasure the sinner may love

the saint. By the Holy Spirit, the demons of passion may weep at the touch of gentle pity. By the love of the Saviour, soft springs may rise in stony hearts. Children, never let evil overcome you. Stand your ground. Overcome evil with good. Be cheerful labourers. Who ought to rejoice like the servants of the Lord ? And can they do so, if they behold with severe scrutiny the mote in their brother's eye ?—if they go mourning and weeping over the depravity of their neighbours ? They can pray for them in secret and at home ; but scare them not, disgust them not, by over-zeal, by fanatic strictures, by the ‘stand by, I am holier than thou.’ ”

“ My dear Berrington,” interrupted my aunt, roused from her slumbers by his emphatic tones, “ I have always told Mrs. Stewart the same ;—she should not suffer her girls to stand talking in the lanes so often with young Hamilton.”

“ Ah !” answered my uncle, “ I like to see girls and boys consorting together ; they improve each other.”

"My dear!" reprovingly said my aunt, "you don't seem to know what you are saying."

"Then I will merely mention I should like a cup of tea, my dear!" answered my uncle, quietly.

CHAPTER X.

"Whate'er my doom,
It cannot be unhappy ; God hath given me
The boon of resignation."—WILSON.

ISABEL and I set about our preparations for an immediate departure, each after our own fashion. She made no secret of her delight at the change. To see new worlds was happiness—to escape from Georgy's irritating temper was happiness—to travel with Nellie, and have her all to herself, that was in itself happiness. So she said. Somewhat of awe was mixed with my feelings. I could do the work laid out for me in my uncle's house, with God's help. What was now to be my fate ? and should I be able to say the same, in this new home, with people

whom I felt were utterly different to any I had met before ?

Not all the determination to keep within me a cheerful, trusting heart availed, to enable me to depart from Willow Wood with the fortitude and calmness of a proper heroine. The kisses and bewailings of the children, who appeared to think I was as much their playfellow as if I had never associated with the two elder girls, made me pale with suppressed emotion. There were no children at the house to which I was going. What should I have to love and be interested in ?

My uncle gave Isabel his blessing, but he said to me, " Child Nellie, do not go to heaven ere you see me again."

My aunt kissed her daughter fondly, saying, " It is a great comfort to me Nellie is so near you. She has a way of managing you none of us understand."

Georgy scolded and sobbed by turns, intreating me not to forget her, and threatening Isabel with various evils, if she made use of her advan-

tages in being with me to usurp the greater share of my affections."

"Missie, little Missie," said a voice behind me. "Take this," continued Nurse, "to mind you of me," putting into my hand a little pin-cushion of her own making. "People will love ye, wherever ye be, but mind ye think of us."

I kissed her, as I answered, "Thank you, Nurse—how can I forget those who are kind to the 'motherless bairn?'"

"Ye're the child of a' that see ye, little Missie, and mind ye think kindly of Nurse, wha has no been as good to ye as she ought."

So, as I left their door, I thanked God that in my first trial of a new home He had given me the love of those within it, and my absence was mourned for as the absence of a daughter.

But Isabel would not let me think long.

"Come, Nellie, don't look so pale. If you would only cry like any other person, you would get it all over and be quite merry."

"I did not see you cry."

"No, to be sure, why should I? I am rather sorry to leave papa, but I should have been ten times more sorry to see you go away and leave me behind. However I would not have stood that."

"How far shall you be living from me?"

"Exactly three quarters of a mile. You are going to a grand, great house in Portland Place, though I have heard 'tis a horrid, dull street, and I am somewhere up the New Road. If I do not see you once a-week, Nellie—"

"There—don't frown and look so angry. How can you and I settle any plans without consulting those with whom we live?"

"I shall run away to see you."

"That will be very amusing, no doubt; but I shall like to see what sort of people my guardians are, before I promise to elope also."

"I do not know anything of them. Mamma was telling some long story about shameful usage, and bad mother, and marrying the wrong person; but really I could make neither head or tail of it all."

We now took our places in the train, and met with no adventures by the way, as the lady under whose care we had been placed, religiously fulfilled her duty by suffering no one to come near us, and did her best to prevent accidents, by cautioning every guard who approached to examine the wheels, to warn the drivers, as she called them, and to make rigid enquiries as to any other trains going up or down.

She was a stranger to us, both in person and name, but had been pointed out to my uncle by a friend as a fitting person to take charge of us to London. He had called and made the request, which had been most politely acceded to on her part.

So diligently was she bent on fulfilling her duties as our guardian that we had proceeded a good many miles ere she found time to ask our names and relationship. Perhaps she would not have done it then, but Isabel having crossed over to sit by me, the contrast between us seemed to strike her with a sudden idea.

"Are you sisters? Ah, I thought not—very unlike! Now if I was you, my dear, I would keep my veil down."

"But I like to look out, and see everything," answered Isabel, "I never was from home before."

"The more reason you should take my advice. If I was in your situation, the most beautiful country in the world should never induce me to incur the imputation of wishing to be admired."

Our railway guardian was remarkably plain, so that I could not help smiling, while Isabel, in her usual impetuous manner, exclaimed—

"Wish to be admired! Why should I care to be admired by people I know nothing about?"

"They will say so, nevertheless, my dear.—There now—there!—that young man has three times passed our door, and looked in. Of course, he sees you like his admiration."

"He seemed looking for a seat, ma'am!" I interrupted. Isabel was getting up a gust, her colour mounting higher and higher.

"A seat here!—A seat, indeed! I'd have him know, when I am entrusted with the care of young ladies—Guard! guard! here! tell that young man not to come here; I won't have him; I have young ladies in charge."

"Don't be alarmed, ma'am! he has taken his seat; the train is going."

"Guard! guard! tell him not to try.—Dear me, how tiresome these trains are! Now if I was in the driver's situation, I should make a point of asking if every one was satisfied, before I set the train going. Suppose, now, that young man attempts again to effect an entrance here, at the next station—

"There are more guards!" I ventured to insinuate.

"True! and so you are not sisters? Surely the gentleman asked me to take care of his daughters."

"She is the same as a sister to us," muttered the still angry Isabel.

"My dear, don't frown so. You are a pretty

girl, and will be very handsome ; and so if I was in your situation, I would not mar my beauty by a frown."

" How can one help it when one is angry ? "

" You should not be angry. Now if I was you, I should not think of being vexed by the admiration of a young man I never saw before."

I squeezed Isabel's hand, as much as to say, " Our chaperon is an oddity ! " Isabel returned my touch, and for answer smoothed her brow.

" You are, indeed, very pretty—very stylish ! If I was in your situation, I should mind what I was about, and not throw myself away."

In what manner Isabel could throw herself away was Greek to us both ; so we remained silent.

" I do not mean I was ever pretty, or had a chance to throw myself away ; but I make a point of putting myself into everybody's situation, and then telling them how to act. So you are not relations ? "

" We are cousins."

"Cousins! Humph! cousins! Now it depends upon the situation a cousin is in as to whether I acknowledge them or not as cousins. You are very unlike your pretty cousin."

"Yes, ma'am!" said I.

"She is a great deal better than being pretty!" exclaimed Isabel, "and she is—"

"We are stopping!—the train slacks! Guard! guard! there's a man, a young man—No, we don't stop; we are going on. What an unexpected relief. You may raise your veil, my dear."

"I never put it down!" answered Isabel, angrily.

"And so you are both going to school? To whom has your father entrusted you? Had I been in his situation, I know where I should have sent you."

Thus did our voluble and somewhat eccentric chaperon run on,—her questionings and remarks being invariably broken in upon by the fear of "that young man" effecting a forcible entrance

into our carriage, and what she should do in such a situation."

Thus we had almost reached our journey's end ere she discovered our names and real destination, and she had not recovered from her surprise at mine, ere we arrived at the Euston Square Station.

"And so you are the little sea-child of whom I have heard him speak? Dear, dear! had I been in your mother's situation, I really should have felt it my duty not to rear such a child. That is why you are so small, my dear—quite a blighted little being!"

"The dearest, sweetest angel of a Nellie, worth all the rest of the world put together!" burst in Isabel, her gust now blowing at its height.

"My dear, in your situation I should draw down my veil, and not talk so loud. Here we are arrived almost, and there will be that young man."

"We put him down an hour ago, ma'am," suggested I.

"That does not matter; he is not the only young man in the world. And so you are that poor little unfortunate child! Often, often have I heard of you: and now I see you, upon my word, my dear, I don't think I would be in your situation."

"Who spoke of my Nellie?"

"My nevey, of course; a most charming person; though I cannot say I would have acted as he has done if I had been in his situation. In fact, I should have done just the reverse."

"How does he know anything of Nellie?"

"Of course, my dear, he knows everything—the storm, the child, the old doctor. Now if I had been in either of their situations, I would have shown them what to do."

"Even the storm, I hope!" laughed Isabel, irresistibly impelled to do so by the absurdity of our chaperon."

“ Hush, my dear ! put down your veil ; here we are. Let me look out first. I must see if that young man is really gone. Guard ! guard ! here. Is there a young man ?—Dear, dear ! good heart alive ! they are all young men !”

CHAPTER XI.

"Times go by turns, and chances change by course
From foul to fair—from better hap to worse."

ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

HAVING obtained a right and title, as she said, to take care of me, because of my relationship to her nephew, to the truth or probability of which she never gave us the slightest clue, our worthy chaperon insisted upon escorting me home.

Thus the delight of a last drive together, upon which we had dwelt with girlish pleasure, was denied us. We had no time for many adieus or fond words. What with the fear of losing her luggage, and the number of young men ever about, and overlooking my poor little self every minute, I did not feel sorry when we were both

safely ensconced in a cab, and I could kiss my hand in last adieu to Isabel, as she drove off in another, with the servant who had been sent to meet her.

Such was the noise, rattle, and confusion of our drive to Portland Place that I heard nothing of all my companion was saying, though I could safely follow the motion of her lips, as she uttered her favourite expression, "If I was in your situation," &c. It was not until we drew up at the door, and, in her eagerness to do her duty well, she urged the slow cabman to ring again, that she said, long before the servant could hear her, "My nevey at home, my nevey, Capt. Forest," that I discovered why she took so much interest in me.

"What a man!—he is deaf. My nevey, Capt. Forest, or Lady Maria—are they at home? If I was in their situation, of course I should be at home—so they must be. Let me out, postboy."

My good chaperon seemed determinately old-fashioned, and it might be that the cabman would

have remonstrated on this misappropriation of his title, but the servant came forward.

"The Captain and my lady are both out, Ma'am; but a young lady is expected, Miss Offley."

"Here she is—this is her. To whom am I to deliver her? Most extraordinary conduct! If I was in my nevey's situation—"

"What would you do, Aunt?" said a fine, musical man's voice, on my side of the cab.

We both turned, and filling the space of the window, like a beautiful picture in a rubbishy frame, was a face so handsome, so bright, so perfect a picture of manly beauty, I unconsciously felt between my fingers for a piece of clay, to mould off the likeness on the spot. But Isabel had been stern in her determination, I was to do no dirty work, when travelling with her.

"Nevey, Noel, Capt. Forest, let me introduce you to—"

"Not the slightest occasion, my dear Aunt, to do so. We are old acquaintances, though you

do not remember me, I dare say. But are you really the little child of the sea? I thought you were fourteen years old."

We were now out in the hall, and I could not help blushing at the surprise he expressed.

"Just as I said, a blighted blossom—nonsense to rear her."

"Nay, Aunt, little things are very precious. I will not have my ward embarrassed. She will grow. Come in, and have some refreshment."

"No, I cannot—I have no time. I must go, the post-boys charge so much for waiting. Good bye, my dear, good bye. Very glad to have made your acquaintance; but still, if I had been in your situation, I never would—" Here she stopped. I felt convinced she was about to add, "have lived," or something of that sort, but prevented herself just in time.

Capt. Forest returned to me, after seeing his aunt safely off, and with the same gentleness and courtesy that he would have treated a queen, took my hand and said, "Welcome to a new home,

my dear girl. It shall not be my fault, if you are unhappy in it."

I felt convinced of this, as I looked up into his beautiful, frank eyes, and read the expression of a fine heart within them.

"What am I to call you?"

"Nellie."

"Thank you: I like that name very well, and I think you must call me Uncle."

He was so young and good-looking, so unlike my own uncle, I felt shy in responding to this wish.

"Never mind," he said, laughing kindly, "you must get accustomed to us first before you accord us your confidence. Now sit down and eat something, while I tell you how glad I am to see you."

Under the influence of his manner I became happy and unrestrained. I could smile as he began to adventure some remarks upon our first acquaintance and all he had done for me; and I could not help thinking what a good and kind heart he must have, thus to devote

his time and care to a little school-girl. It was not in my nature to ask any questions of myself, but rather to take things as they came. Yet I thought it somewhat strange that my own relation, Lady Maria, should have quitted the house almost as I was expected, while he avowedly acknowledged he returned from his ride on purpose to receive me.

We had been ushered into a little back parlour, and many thundering knocks and noises disturbed the rest of the house, without apparently affecting us. Yet, as I was concluding my meal in some haste, that I might not tax Capt. Forest's patience too much, I was conscious of something like a silk dress rustling outside the door. A colour rose in my guardian's face, but he took no further notice, continuing a description he was giving me of Dr. Blaize, whom he had lately seen.

Suddenly the door flashed open, as if by magic, and I saw standing before me a lady, with strange, cold, blue eyes, fixed as if in one glance upon us

both, yet we were at opposite sides of the table. The cold look changed, and a pleasant smile filled its place, as she said—"So this is my ward."

"Yes, Maria, but I thought you were out driving."

"I recollect the child was to arrive about this hour and returned. What red hair she has!"

Now I had felt a little mortification at the surprise my guardian (I liked to call one so good and handsome by this name) had expressed, upon seeing that I was so small; but the tone of Lady Maria's voice told me plainly, that she meant to annoy me if she could. The same instinct that warned me of this, prompted me to say in answer,

"My father used to say so always."

"Oh! then, you cannot be mortified at my remark."

"No, Madam, it seems pleasant to me."

As I looked at her, I wondered at her prettiness. She was small, and of an elegant, slight figure. Her dress seemed to me in the most charming taste, of the most graceful materials,

while a little species of gossamer bonnet surrounded a face composed of delicate features and lovely complexion. As she turned rather to the light, I could see she was not so young as I thought at first.

"She has finished her luncheon. I therefore presume, Maria, she had better be shown to her room," said Capt. Forest.

"It must be her dinner," answered Lady Maria, the cold stony look coming into her eyes, and turning the expression of her pretty features into one that forcibly reminded me of the glitter of an evil eye. "I cannot allow so young a child to dine late. Are you ten yet, my dear?"

"I prefer dining early, madam, and I am fourteen years old."

"Then run up stairs, unpack, make yourself comfortable and at home, Nellie," said Captain Forest. "Now, Maria, are you going out again?"

"The carriage is yet at the door. What are your plans?" she answered.

"I intend calling on the admiral," he said.

"Then I will convey you there, and call for you, on my return," she replied.

"So be it, Hughes, send my horse to the stable, and order the carriage to draw up."

These last words I heard, as I was going up stairs. Every step I took upwards confirmed me in one thing, namely, that I was about to live among people who had rather a larger share of the sins and weaknesses of the world than I had yet encountered. I sat down on one of my boxes, and looked round my room. It appeared to me to have a very worldly look; it was dull, but had no goodness about it that redeemed that dulness. The little bed was a pert, stuck-up one, with a great pretence of a canopy. The chairs were brazen with brass, heavy and unsocial-looking. The washing-stand was painted in staring colours, as if they were to redeem the want of a proportionate quantity, as well as size of the ware it held. And a little bright green tin was placed on a square yard of matting, as if to make believe it was a bath. I should have

thought it small for my doll, when I had one, but I believe it is a weakness with little people to have magnificent ideas. The sole ornaments that I could see were a jovial rosy-cheeked friar, who carried within his capacious paunch lucifer matches ; while opposite to him was a demure nun, with drooping eyes, from behind whose white cap rose up a stiff array of spills. Both these ornaments were made of common china, and offended my modelling eyes more than anything in the room.

A slight shaking wardrobe was the sole thing capable of holding my worldly possessions ; and its bright ochre colour was ludicrously contrasted with the dingy nondescript carpet. I sat and looked round, speculating upon the capabilities of turning my modicum of London room into a home.

I was depressed. I could not disguise from myself that I should never make this place my home. Lady Maria's eyes had no love in them. Unlike many mundane affairs, whose first un-

favourable impressions give way by degrees to better and more desirable ones, a conviction shot into my heart that I should suffer a great deal in this house : also that I should owe a great deal of it to myself ; perhaps I might become heartless, and have stony eyes—no, this was too sad a fate.

I was forgetting my uncle's lessons already ; repining without working. I plucked hold of the nun and the friar, and hid them out of sight ; I opened my boxes, spread out all my worldly goods, placed precious possessions and kindly gifts in full sight : arranged all my works of art, (being neither more nor less than my feeble attempts at modelling the faces of those I had just left,) in the place of the nun and friar. Gave a move to some of the chairs, and rearranged part of the furniture, so that to my eyes the room might look somewhat different to one at an inn.

I worked very hard. In fact, this was not my first experience of the necessity of work to

drive away thought ; and besides, I was actuated by the determination to make my room assume a different appearance. I would fight out the battle at once with it, and conquer,— I hoped.

CHAPTER XII.

"A rose-bud set with little wilful thorns,
As sweet as English air could make her."

TENNYSON.

I WAS very nearly satisfied at the end of an hour or so, that I could do no more. Nothing could mend the hideous paper on the walls, the dingy carpet, the ochre-coloured wardrobe, considerably awry, and the little high bed, canopied over with heavy solemn drapery, fit only for a ghostly four-post bed, looming sadly at the end of a haunted chamber.

But my books looked gay and cheerful in their bright bindings; my uncle smiled in a friendly manner, (my bust of him was the best likeness I had ever taken), from the

centre of the mantel-piece, surrounded by all his family, equally complaisant, as it appeared to me.

I stepped back to take a full and deliberate view of all my arrangements. My eyes fell upon the door-way ; a woman was standing there, looking at me.

“ Don’t be startled, miss ; well now, to be sure, why didn’t you call me ? I would have done all this for you.”

“ Thank you,” I answered, recovering from my surprise as quickly as I could.

“ Not but what you have done it vastly well, for such a little miss. And what may all these images be, I wonder ?”

I told her, but she evidently did not admire them, and took them up one after another, in the vain hope of discovering something either reasonable or handsome about them, I saw.

“ I put you such a pretty little man and woman,” observed she.

I could not help smiling when I thought of

our different tastes, but she laughed aloud when I asked her if I might have a larger bath, and said, looking from me to the green pan,—

“ Yes, surely, if you will promise not to drown yourself. Now, come along, and see Miss Glynne.”

As I followed her, I tried to recal what I had heard of Miss Glynne. My aunt must have said that Lady Maria had requested my presence in her house, to be educated with her daughter. At least that was all I could remember. The knowledge that I was to have a companion of my own age, broke suddenly upon me, as a boon of great price, and coloured my face with pleasure, which the servant remarked, but she added, “ I doubt Miss Glynne will be but ill pleased to see you so young. However, she is a sweet-tempered young lady, and wants amusement sadly.”

At first, when the door was opened of a large and cheerful room, I thought I saw Lady Maria lying on a sofa. But each step nearer proved

to me that though wonderfully alike, this lady was really youthful. And so pretty. Her delicate cheek was flushed with a bright colour, and her eyes were tender and soft, being liquid with feeling. Even though manifestly disappointed at my appearance, she kissed me with the manner of an elder sister caressing a little pet one.

"She looks clever and intelligent though, Neale," she said, turning to the servant.

"Oh yes, Miss Glynne, surely; she will be gay company yet," answered she.

"Is it possible," said I, "that you require a governess as well as myself. I thought I had heard we were to have the same together?"

"Very likely that is an idea of Lady Maria's; I am nearly twenty, child, and have lived long enough to wish I was dead."

"So do I, very often; but still we must live on."

"And why do you wish to die, you little quaint thing?"

"If I am tempted to do anything wrong or

wicked, I shall never see my father and mother more."

"I am afraid that idea would do nothing towards keeping me good," answered Miss Glynne, and a childish pettishness came into her face.

"Hush, my dear," said Neale, in a tone of admonition.

"Go down stairs, Neale, and amuse yourself. I dare say my little cousin will wait upon me."

Neale departed, apparently nothing loth.

"I so want a friend," began Miss Glynne, looking rather captiously at me.

"Are you ill, that you lie here?" I asked.

"Yes; I am wasting away, dying of a broken heart."

Knowing nothing about the disease, I thought it best to be silent.

"I am a victim—the unhappy victim of an unnatural mother."

These words sounded, to me, like some of my

aunt's, when relating her tales of the day. And if we missed hearing them from her, they were faithfully recorded again by Georgy.

But an unnatural mother was a thing not to be realised by me.

" What does Neale do for you, that I can do ? Shall I read aloud ? "

" No, child ; tell me something about yourself —acquaint me with your thoughts and impressions, so that I may judge if it is worth my while to get attached to you."

I presume I so deported myself, that I was likely to gain this favour.

She not only became interested, but almost animated, rising from her sofa with alacrity, to go and view all my works of art. She was taller than her mother, and moved with a careless easy grace, that made me mentally resolve to study her attitudes, with the ardour of one devoted to the art.

She laughed and chatted about different matters, to the utter forgetfulness of her broken

heart, and was in the midst of a most animated harangue regarding her school-days, when Neale appeared.

“ Why, Miss Glynne, I do declare it is hours after your tea-time, and you never rang.”

“ I thought I felt very much exhausted; but this is such a nice little girl. She is not a child at all; and like no one I ever saw before. And, Neale, here, put your ear down. I don’t think she likes Lady Maria.”

This latter sentence was whispered too loud for me to be ignorant of its purport.

“ I should be very sorry to say I disliked a person, whom I had only seen for five minutes,” I remarked aloud.

“ Why?” asked Miss Glynne, frowning, as severely as her pretty face would allow her. “ My uncle says, unjust judgments are almost always punished in this world, to keep the uncharitableness of the sin more prominently before us.”

“ You may judge of Lady Maria as harshly

as you please, and you will never be unjust," exclaimed Miss Glynne.

"Hush, my dear," said Neale.

"Go and get my dress ready, Neale," said Miss Glynne, half haughtily, half pettishly.

"That I will," answered the good-tempered woman, "right willingly. And little miss will go with you, perhaps."

"Where?" I asked.

"We are allowed, as a favour, to appear in the drawing-room, for an hour every evening," said Miss Glynne, with little emphasis.

"I will go wherever you like," I answered caressingly.

"Dear little thing. Now is she not a lovable child, Neale?"

"Uncommon," answered Neale, with her mouth full of pins; for she had already plunged, with happy alacrity, in all the mysteries of the toilette.

As I left them, to prepare mine, I thought, "Perhaps Miss Glynne is a spoiled child."

CHAPTER XIII.

“There is an evil and a good
In every soul, unknown to thee—
A darker or a brighter mood
Than ought thine eye can ever see.”

E. TAYLOR.

“Do I look nice?” was Miss Glynne’s remark, as I re-entered her presence, prepared to go down to the drawing-room. It was addressed to Neale.

“Bootiful, Miss Glynne!” was her answer. And it was very true. In spite of her solemn assertions that she was wasting away from the effects of a broken heart, Miss Glynne looked as lovely and fresh as anything I had ever seen, while the scarf of fine lace falling from her head over her shoulders, which she wore in right of

being an invalid, gave an ethereal tone to her whole appearance.

"And what do you think?" she asked of me.

"You look like what I think the angels will be when I see them."

"Fanciful child! She is always thinking of death and angels, Neale. Now we must not allow that."

"No, no, poor dear! It is very wrong to be always dreaming of the dismals. A pleasant evening to you, young ladies."

I hoped I might be forgiven, thinking that Neale was highly pleased, on her own account, to see us depart: and I was so far right, as I discovered it was only now and then that Miss Glynne went down stairs, and that Neale's holidays were scant and few.

There were three ladies in the drawing-room when we entered, who had but just left the dining-room. One of them was our vigilant and energetic chaperon of the morning, whose name I had discovered to be Miss Ann Scann. She

generally went by the name of aunt Scann. Lady Maria did not look at all pleased on seeing us ; and while her cold, glittering eye rested on her daughter, she said, " That child ought to be in bed."

" She is my companion, according to your own arrangement, Lady Maria : where I go, she goes." Nothing could exceed the haughtiness of Miss Glynne as she thus spoke.

The stranger lady coloured and stared. Lady Maria seemed to shake with some inward emotion, though her complexion did not vary ; but all the little, glittering ornaments of her head-dress quivered.

" Come here," she said, addressing me, " what is your usual hour for retiring ?"

" Ten o'clock," answered I, short and concise. In fact, I liked answering her thus ; and so great was my pleasure, I did not perceive a little plant of mischief growing up in my kingdom.

" Is this your little ward ?" asked the stranger lady.

" Yes ! Ellen, go and speak to Lady Hartley."

My name not being Ellen, I had a right to conceive she was not addressing me. So I looked at Miss Glynne, who also took no notice. Lady Maria coloured angrily, and turning to me, said—

“Your manners, young lady, do no credit to the persons with whom you have been associating, or else you are apt in apeing others.”

I advanced to Lady Hartley, and said, “Madam, I did not know Lady Maria meant me. I beseech your pardon.”

“You have it, my dear little girl,” said the lady, kindly.

“And a very nice little girl you will find her, Lady Hartley,” interrupted Miss Scann. “I travelled with her this morning; and I can assure you, had I been in her situation, I could not, under all circumstances, have acted better. You must call me aunt, remember, my dear; I feel quite like an aunt towards you!”

“Thank you, aunt!” answered I, low and soft, that only she could hear, blushing and smiling too.

"Good child, nice child! very little, very small, you see, Lady Hartley, with eyes far too large: her face is all eyes, poor dear!" continued aunt Scann.

"I like her eyes," broke in Miss Glynne, abruptly; "they resemble pools of clear water."

"Very true, very true, wells—with truth at the bottom; but if I was in your situation, my dear—" She paused.

I could not help laughing at the conceit of my own brain, which made me think aunt Scann was about to say, "If they were hers, she would sew half of them up."

"Ellen," said Lady Maria, "I do not approve of young girls laughing about nothing, or at their elders."

For the second time, I had to beg pardon; and I retreated behind Miss Glynne for safety from further humiliations. The next half-hour was spent by the two ladies talking together of various public events, chiefly relating to the Navy; while aunt Scann and Miss Glynne con-

versed in somewhat animated whispers, during which the former placed herself in various wonderful and extraordinary situations, verbally,— while the latter confided many sorrowful, not to say indignant, feelings to the sympathizing listener. I should not have been unhappy had I some of my modelling paste between my fingers, Miss Glynne was so wonderfully pretty and graceful, but so like her mother. At the end of the half-hour the gentlemen came in ; and from that moment all likeness between mother and daughter ceased. Lady Maria seemed possessed by a demon of restlessness and anger ; while Miss Glynne became animated by a soft and gentle gaiety that made her appear prettier than ever.

My guardian came to us immediately, a great deal of pleasure being expressed in his handsome eyes, while a quiet sort of fatherly air developed itself in his manner of greeting us. It did not misbecome him, yet it looked strange to me, he was so young and goodlooking. The careless

sailor's knot with which he had tied his neckerchief gave him a still more youthful appearance.

"Come, come," said his companion, who was evidently a sailor of the old school, and proved to be Admiral Sir John Hartley, K.C.B., "don't keep all the pretty girls to yourself, Forest; introduce an old weather-beaten hulk."

Captain Forest laughed as he said—

"They are my daughters, Admiral, both of them, one by right of her mother, the other from adoption. Is it not so, Nellie?"

"I do not choose to have the child called by that familiar name, Noel," interrupted Lady Maria, inserting herself suddenly among the group.

"Nellie is a favourite name among us sailors, my lady!" said the Admiral.

"I choose her to be called Ellen, nevertheless."

Thinking it better to put an end to Lady Maria's mistake, I said as softly but clearly as I could—

"My name is not Ellen, it is Uriel."

"An angel's name! I knew it!" exclaimed Miss Glynne, vehemently. "I like you better than ever, you dear little thing."

"I never knew any other name than Nellie; I can answer to no other."

"Keep it, my dear child," said Captain Forest. "Maria, you will soon get accustomed to it. Now let us have some music."

There was a certain frank and irresistible air about all that my guardian did and said that no one could gainsay.

Lady Maria sang and played well, I thought Miss Glynne did not. As the clock struck ten, Lady Maria looked at me, and said, "Go!" which I did, without any other person perceiving the by-play.

CHAPTER XIV.

“ The spirit walks of every day deceased,
And smiles an angel, or a fury frowns.”

YOUNG.

THE next morning, Miss Glynne was very haughty and capricious with me. She chattered gaily to Neale, who waited upon us, while we breakfasted; but she darkly hinted all sorts of strange things against me.

I soon discovered that her ill-humour arose from my desertion, as she called it, over night.

I briefly explained that I was sent away, and, having vainly tried to make me say not only that I was sorry, but that I would never do so any more, she suddenly reinstated me in her good opinion.

"Nice little thing, is she not Neale? so firm, yet so quiet about it."

"Miss Offley appears an excellent young lady," answered the ready Neale. "I wish we may all prove as good."

The insinuation, that was barely perceptible in this sentence touched Miss Glynne, as the spur might irritate a high spirited horse. Neale was dismissed peremptorily. When she reappeared, an hour afterwards, it was to usher in a governess, with whom Miss Glynne was already familiar, as she was supposed to require the services of one still.

They chatted and laughed together for a short space, more after the fashion of friends than pupil and governess.

"So this is my new charge," at last said Miss Seymour. "Well, Selina, of necessity I must attend to her studies, as she is but a child."

"Of course," answered Miss Glynne. "In fact it will amuse me very much to see you at it. I hope, Nellie, you will be naughty, and get

put into the corner. I feel as if a fit of laughing would quite refresh me."

I ran for my books. I was pleased at the idea of having something to do, and liked the appearance of Miss Seymour very much.

I had scarcely returned, when we heard a man's foot-step coming up the staircase that led to our study.

Miss Glynne became crimson, her eyes flashing with pleasure; while Miss Seymour looked at her, half alarmed.

"It is my guardian's step," said I, to reassure them. I had remarked a peculiar step that he had, the day before.

"I knew it," exclaimed Miss Glynne, still more excited.

"What can be required?" murmured Miss Seymour, still more alarmed.

Their conduct puzzled me. However he was now at the door.

"Good morning, Miss Seymour; good morning, my dears" (how absurd that sounded from

him to us). “This is my little ward,” continued he, laying his hand on my head. “I am very anxious about her, Miss Seymour; and want to bespeak yours and Selina’s good offices for her.” His voice was peculiarly rich and mellow, so that one listened, as to some music, when he spoke.

“Oh, Capt. Forest,” said Miss Glynne, with blushing eagerness; “I love the dear little thing already beyond——”

“You may rest assured, Sir,” interrupted Miss Seymour, “her happiness and well-doing shall be our first care.” While she said this, she rose, and placed herself by the head of the sofa, on which Miss Glynne was lying, so that she touched her curls caressingly.

Miss Glynne drew herself back, with a defiant gesture, and became as pale as she had been red. Perhaps she heard, as I did, a rustling of silk on the little staircase.

“I hope now, Selina, that you will be able to visit us every evening,” said Capt. Forest. “I mean to get up some little musical parties, with

dancing and other amusements, for the sake of the girls, Miss Seymour, and whenever you can join us, you will do us honour."

Miss Seymour bowed, pleased ; and well she might be, my guardian's manner was so happy, so courteously frank.

" I think at their age, society tends more to educate them than books, Miss Seymour, do not you ?"

" My new pupil seems rather young for that, as yet, sir," answered Miss Seymour.

" She is a little walking deception, as you will discover ;" he answered smiling. " But, now, Selina, my visit is as much to you as Miss Seymour." There was such a rustle outside the door, I felt certain he heard it, for a colour rose in his face. " I want to ask you to resume your riding lessons, for the sake of Nellie. Whenever I am disengaged, I will accompany you. But, at all events, Joseph is quite at your service ; so that there will be nothing to prevent your riding every day. I ask it as a favour,

because I fear little Nellie, being a country child, will suffer in health, unless she has as much air as we can give her in London."

Miss Glynne was eager in her wishes to oblige him.

"I have, of course, told your mother, and only waited your consent, to go and seek for a safe pony for Nellie."

Though I had said nothing, my face was sufficiently expressive of my delight and gratitude, for he laughed, like a happy boy, as he caught a glimpse of it.

The door burst open at this sound, and Lady Maria appeared. She said nothing, as she surveyed us all. I wondered I had ever thought her pretty.

"This is my private apartment," began Miss Glynne, angrily.

"Into which no one is more welcome than your mother, Selina, I hope," interrupted Capt. Forest. "Look at that little expressive face, Maria; are you so fond of riding, little one?"

I had barely time to answer, before Lady Maria said,

"I was seeking you, Noel, to read this letter."

"I have finished my business here, so I will accompany you down stairs. Good bye, Miss Seymour."

So they departed. Tears rolled down Miss Glynne's face; Miss Seymour whispered coaxing words to her; while I arranged my books, and thought, child as I was, "How strange all this is! Why does Miss Glynne hate her mother? Why does her mother act thus by her? Can they not see how good my guardian is, and how he wishes to make peace between them? How can they refuse the mediation of one so kind and good?" Girlish like, I was becoming enthusiastic about him—I—who did not know what it was to care twice about the same thing. It was the Spirit of Good shining forth from his eyes that attracted me—as the baleful glitter in Lady Maria's repelled me.

But Miss Glynne was recovering. The whispers became louder, the kisses less coaxing.

"Read to us, Miss Offley, anything you like, that I may judge of your taste," said Miss Seymour.

"If I read well, perhaps you will ask Nellie to do so, another time, and not Miss Offley," I answered.

To this she agreed, smilingly.

Miss Seymour remained with us until four o'clock, when we prepared for our ride. When she left, she kissed me and said, gravely, "Selina tells me your name is Uriel. You must try to be the little angel wanted in this unfortunate house."

CHAPTER XV.

"I love to meditate on bliss to come,
Not that I'm unhappy here, but that
The hope of higher bliss may rectify
The lower feeling which we now enjoy."—BAILEY.

By the end of a week we all fell into our proper places and habits. Also I had been to see my dear Isabel, and she had told Miss Glynne, that to be entirely happy, I must have some clay always at hand. And she had told Miss Seymour, and Miss Seymour had deemed it only proper to request a private audience of Lady Maria, who, after giving the request a week's thought, had at last seen no harm in my talent for modelling being encouraged. I was to have lessons.

Also being discovered to be older, and more staid than my appearance betokened, I was given a sum of money, as an allowance, to spend as I liked.

Lady Maria smiled naturally, and for the first time I had seen her, when I asked if I might spend some of my money in re-papering my room. She even went up stairs, to look at the obnoxious colours so deprecated by me, and took me with her in the carriage to choose those I should like better.

She professed herself amused and entertained by the simplicity of my words and manners, though she had been angry with me at first, because I refused to go at all with her, if the time interfered with Selina's ride.

She complained to my guardian of this obstinacy ; but as she could not say I was either rude or pert, her common complaint of Miss Glynne, the matter dropped to the ground.

In choosing my paper, I felt all the importance of a new era in my life. It seemed to me neces-

sary to act with as much wisdom in the matter as if I had to furnish a new house. I had already made up my mind that the prevailing colour should be green. Clusters of climbing roses gave me a sensation of pleasure, as they lay blushing on a sea-green tint of freshness. I took the opportunity of the thorough *routation* my room underwent during the process of papering, to effect some other reforms ; the principal one was to remove the heavy canopy above my bed. Sad and unpromising as my London home had looked to me, on my first introduction to it, yet did it give me a lasting lesson regarding the will to conquer disagreeables.

Partly the work of my own hands, mostly at the cost of other things, and therefore the more duly appreciated, and wholly regulated by my own taste, this little room became to me an object of love, care, and consecration. I never entered it without feeling that no evil must be permitted by me to sully its walls, no angry word should be heard within it, no unkind or wrong judgment

should be able to cast back upon my heart, as I looked round it, "Thus and thus did you think, when your eye last rested here. So angry did you then feel, when last you saw me." My little room was indeed to be to me a haven, wherein I might pause and rest from the labour of the world. I peopled it with those I loved. The shadow of my mother always dwelt by the little couch, while my father had a recess formed by the fashion of the old fire-place, in which I placed a high-backed arm-chair, that Selina spared me, and which night and morning heard my whispered orisons.

In the gloom of the dark November evenings I lived again in the presence of my parents, turning back to the real world with somewhat reluctant feet, yet still resolute to do my duty therein. Except the servant that swept out, and tended my room, no one entered it, and she had not much to do, as I loved to garnish and beautify it myself. I was regarded as an oddity by the domestics, but as I was a quiet one, my

whims and eccentricities, if I had any, soon ceased to surprise them.

Almost every Saturday, my guardian and Lady Maria went down to Erith, near which place his mother lived. They generally remained until Monday. During this period Miss Glynne was quite unlike herself, being both girlish and happy, and roaming over the house as contented as possible. We were allowed to ask Isabel to spend the time with us; and as they became more intimate, the energetic spirit of Isabel's habits seemed to please and excite Miss Glynne's admiration. They began to like each other with school-girl fondness; so that with the waywardness of her peevish nature, she would bemoan to Neale that Isabel had not been chosen as her companion instead of myself.

"Now that is very ungrateful of you, Miss Glynne. Little miss does her best to please you all day."

"I know she does, little darling; but then she is so full of her lessons, and the moment I

have done with her, she is absorbed in her studies again."

"Very good and proper of her. Miss Seymour gives her a grand character for learning, I can tell you, and says she will soon be an overful hand for her. And then her music! dear me, Miss Glynne, it brings tears into my eyes, to see that little small white-faced child playing tunes, like the solemn music of the heavens."

"But Isabel is so merry, and full of all the gossip of school, such as I remember so well. It makes me happy again to hear her."

"They are both very good in their way, but it's lucky we have little Miss in the house instead of Miss Berrington: she is that untidy, there is no reding up after her. And she has a temper of her own, like—"

"Neale, go down stairs, you forget yourself."

By degrees, Selina was so sorry to part with Isabel, she could not express her sorrow, but by writing to her every day, until they met again. Isabel, nothing loth, responded to this tender-

ness : it suited her warm heart and nature to be thus loved. It is not, therefore, to be considered a matter of wonder that Miss Glynne was beginning to forget her broken heart and fading constitution.

I could not help thinking that if Lady Maria would only go from home for a month, Miss Seymour cease from little perpetual reminders and reproofs, and Neale refrain from commiserating and pitying her, Miss Glynne would soon become as happy and lively as Isabel. We speculated very often; Isabel and I, upon the cause of all this, and wove for Selina a very pathetic story, in which she was very good, Lady Maria very naughty, and my guardian everything that was right and kind for both.

But Isabel was fast approaching that innermost recess in Miss Glynne's affections that entitled her to a full confidence, her curiosity being worked up to its highest pitch beforehand by Selina's sadness, and her fears lest the confession should lose her the dearly-prized boon of Isabel's

love. There were more obstacles in the way in addition to these;—Miss Seymour seemed resolutely bent upon preventing any such confidence, and would plunge Miss Glynne into floods of tears by her sharp reproofs and angry remonstrances. Thus, to our mutual sorrow—for Isabel had promised to impart all to me, with Selina's permission—the wished-for confidence was put off from week to week.

Meantime Lady Maria had bestowed on me a little portion of favour; but it did not take me long to discover that it was from no merit on my part, but rather to serve her own purposes.

If I had wanted (to keep me in the straight paths of truth) any experience of the crooked ways into which envy and falsehood can lead one, Lady Maria would have furnished me with an example so extraordinary, that even now I wonder as I think of her.

I could not be said to be an intelligent or sharp judge of the ways of the world, being still so young, and having mixed so little with it; but

as clear as if written in a book lay the thoughts and feelings of this most unhappy woman.

I was driving with her one day—

“ Uriel,” she asked, “ at what time was Captain Forest in the schoolroom this morning ?

“ He was not there at all, ma’am.”

“ Ah, I meant yesterday.”

“ Neither was he there yesterday.”

“ Perhaps not ; but I meant to ask you what is his usual hour for visiting you ?”

“ I do not know, ma’am.”

“ Do you mean to tell me,” she exclaimed, in angry excitement, “ you are sent away ; she receives him alone !”

“ I mean, ma’am, that he has no hour for visiting us. I never saw him in the schoolroom but once, that was the day after I came here.”

“ Subterfuge !” she muttered.

I turned round to look at her, wondering if she meant to apply that word to me. To my surprise, the colour of anger on her face was different from the soft bloom on her cheeks.

Then I was sorry for her. She was not true to look at even ; so no wonder she was false in her speech. Little girls of my age are generally utterly unconscious of any feeling that may prompt a woman grown to make use of art. Therefore I may be pardoned thinking of Lady Maria as one very inferior to the rest of the world.

“ Does Selina often talk to you of Captain Forest ? ” asked Lady Maria, after a pause.

“ Yes, about as much as I do ! ”

“ Pray, has she told you of having seen him once, when a girl, at school ? ”

“ No, ma’am ! ” I answered, opening wide my eyes at this additional fact, to add to mine and Isabel’s imaginary story.

“ You must be careful in regarding nothing that she says, remember.”

I made no answer, for which I disliked myself. I think I ought to have said—“ I love Selina dearly.”

CHAPTER XVI.

"If thy rich heart is like a palace shattered,
Stand up, amid the ruins of thy heart,
And with a calm brow front the solemn stars."

A. SMITH.

JUDGING of me, I presume, by herself, Lady Maria began to think I played her false, or, at all events, placed me in the same position that Selina held in her estimation. We were both subjected to a surveillance that irritated Miss Glynne, amused me, but degraded Lady Maria.

I began to feel how true were my uncle's words, that to ignore evil was to deprive it of half its power. Selina felt strongly inclined to do all that Lady Maria suspected she did, though

what that was I could not define, even if she did. On Saturdays, I generally went with Miss Seymour to the different studios of sculptors, for which we had tickets of admission, while Isabel would ride with Selina. My guardian and Lady Maria, as I mentioned before, went to Erith on that day. It was four o'clock when Miss Seymour left me at our door, returning herself to her own home.

I ran up to the schoolroom, full of the happy evening we three should spend together. It was empty; but hearing unusual sounds in Selina's room, which opened into it, I passed directly through.

Stretched on her bed, as if she had been laid there in the rigid contortions of a violent death, lay Selina, but she was not dead: cries strange and horrible came from her mouth.

"Go away! get away!" cried Neale, the only person I could see in the room, and who evidently was struggling to keep Selina's form on the bed. I threw off my bonnet and cloak,

locked the door, and came to Neale, with the same feelings I had so often done to old Anne, when my mother was ill. "What can I get?" I asked.

"God bless the child, get away! Miss Glynne will never forgive me if she knows I let any one in; and she was took so sudden I hadn't time to lock the door. Well, get me that bottle; now the sponge and basin.—Yes, that's right, remove all that hair; if the fit comes on again, she'll tear it all out. That's my good Missy, worth all the Miss Berringtons in the world! What right had she to flout you, my darling, my lamb? God help her, poor pet!—There—there now, it is your old Neale that loves you more than all the world. Missy, Missy, bide away, she'll hurt you!"

Terrible was it to see that lovely face distorted by convulsions, the white, slender fingers, so powerful in their agony, tearing at all with which they came in contact.

"There, there! she's coming to! God love

you, little Missy, this won't hold her long, she's better already. Poor darling ! dear, sweet lamb ! and I thought she had done with these fits for ever, 'tis so long since she had one. Poor ill-used lady, God reward them that brought you to this ! It is all along of talking to Miss Berrington ; and my poor young lady has been fretted all this last past week. I had my misgivings when they said they would have a quiet talk, and not ride. Miss Berrington's a grand lady, no doubt, in her own ideas ; but put her in my young missus's place, and see if she would have acted any better. Angry, indeed ! what need had she to be angry ? And as if Miss Glynne couldn't live without her love ? Little Missy's worth twenty such !"

All this, and much more, did Neale pour forth as she smoothed and composed Selina's now insensible form itno a state of ease and repose.

" She will sleep now, the dear angel ! and it will be thanks to you, Missy, that I have got

her composed so soon. You are used to such ways, I see. It's four years since she had that terrible shock that brought on these fits ; and my lady would have made out she was mad, but master wouldn't hear of no such a thing ; and he appointed me to have charge of her at Brighton ; and I was to deny her nothing in reason. She was to have a pony to ride, companions if she wished it, and smart dresses. They were away two or three years travelling about, just coming to see her now and then ; and so she began to get stronger and better : but the sight of her mother and the master always threw her back : yet the doctor said that would go off, and there was nothing to prevent her getting quite well, such a lovely young lady as she is. And with that, backed by the doctor, master would have her home, spite of my lady. And he it was, Missy, that settled you should come and live with us for her sake ; for you see Miss Seymour is very good and worthy ; but still she is a bit too wise and severe for my poor darling : who can expect

her to have her senses like other folks, tormented in this fashion? They should bear with and humour her until the Almighty gives her strength to think better. (Out on Miss Berrington!)” This was said aside, and rather strongly expressed.

“ But my cousin may not have been to blame.”

“ Don’t I know her? dashing up to her room like a tragedy queen, and coming down with her bonnet and cloak on, just as I came in to see what made my darling sob so. Says she, ‘ I leave you, Selina, I leave you for ever! ’ ”

“ ‘ No, no,’ sobbed my sweet angel.

“ ‘ I shall return when you can assure me you are no longer unworthy of my love.’ And with that, off she went,—and joy go with her, indeed, with her airs. I saw in a minute how it was with my poor pet. I had only just time to carry her to her bed when she was took. It’s my belief, Miss Offley, she is least to blame of anybody. And what possessed master I could never make

out, unless he was deceived by that ring. She is as cunning as a Jezebel! And if Miss Seymour would be done with her advisings, and everybody forget it, they would see what a real good young lady my young lady is, be whipp'd to 'em all! They should amuse her, and give her something to do—Miss Seymour would be doing her duty a deal more if she set her lessons like she does you, Missy. Master's the only one as ever thinks to divert her mind: all the rest of them is all duty, religion, morality. Let 'em set a good example themselves, say I. There now, the colour is coming! Praise God, she'll sleep. Go you, Missy, and wash your face, my love.—My word, she must have hurt you—and look at all this hair—it won't be missed, howsumdever; you have such a lot. God reward you! And I'll fetch your tea soon, my dear."

Before that evening was over, while Selina slept, I heard as much as Neale knew of her sad story, though that was but little. I pondered over her words so often repeated, that if Selina's

mind was occupied and amused, she would get over the shock of her youth, whatever it was. And I began to think Miss Seymour was not judicious in her treatment of so peculiar a case.

I thought if I had nothing to do, and did not make myself interested about something, I should fret myself to death, wearying : and yet it was not becoming in me so young to give advice.

And I wondered why Isabel was so angry, and what evil poor Selina (whose character was that of a capricious, good-humoured child) could have committed. And after thinking myself into a headache, I fell asleep, determining to upbraid Isabel and advise Miss Seymour,—two important steps for the queen of my kingdom to decide on doing.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Many, many are the shadows
That the dawn of truth reveals ;
Beautiful on life's broad meadows,
Is the light the Christian feels.
Evil shall give place to Goodness,
Wrong be dispossessed by Right ;
Out of old chaotic rudeness,
God evokes a world of light.
Believe in God."

THOMAS COOPER.

BLESSED is the day of rest. More blessed still if spent in solitude.

My experiences were unfolding, like the leaves of a July rose, to the warm touch of the sun. Every hour they expanded ; would that they

might come to perfection without touch of blight, or dash of shower.

Yet could I not hope to gain experience without buying it — to the full, as dearly as my neighbours.

"It would be a week," said Neale to me, "before Miss Glynne could leave her room. If she was fit to be amused, or to see any one, little Missy should have the first chance."

I went to church twice that Sunday. It appeared to me a day marked out from others, as one in which a crisis arrives. I had a solitary breakfast, dinner, and tea ; I was to spend a long evening alone. By the end of it, I was more in spirit with my parents than on earth. Perhaps had I not given loose to my fancy, I should have better held the reins of sense, for I was rudely wakened from my self-complacency, and intended advice-giving to Miss Seymour, by herself, the next day.

"Child, you are very presumptuous ; you have been accidentally, and most unfortunately

rendered cognizant of a fact, both revolting and hideous in its details."

"No, I have not; I know nothing, but that Lady Maria is to blame."

"Hush! who made you a judge? Let the matter rest as it is."

"But, Selina, I wish to do her good."

"Have I not used my utmost endeavours for the last year? I have not relaxed in vigilance for one moment, she is of a character so weak and vacillating, it is disheartening work. I despair."

"Is she weak and vacillating, feeling thus strongly, until reason is upset?"

"Your argument is strong; but still, one with higher principles or better sense, would not thus give way."

"She is so good, so loveable. Miss Seymour, I know she has done nothing wrong."

"I never said she had, Nellie. I only say she is unfortunate, and she makes her fate worse by her manner of bearing it."

"Perhaps we might have acted even worse."

"Nonsense, child, go on with your exercise, let me not have to bear with two silly children in this house."

I was very diligent for an hour.

"Miss Seymour, I think I should like to be a governess."

"That is a liking of which but a short experience will soon cure you, Nellie; but why?"

"It must be so pleasant, leading and guiding young hearts to the right way."

"And what if you cannot?"

"One can always pray for them."

"Nellie, go on with your studies. You have lived a life of abstraction, child, until you can realise no world but the one in which your thoughts dwell. Believe me, you will soon be stranded, and left as sailors say, high and dry, on the beach of your imagination."

"Then, speaking practically, if I was Selina's governess, I should make her work somehow. I would teach her to conquer Fate. Oh, Miss

Seymour, don't you think it is fine to see before you a hill of difficulty, that rises suddenly, perhaps in a night, saying, no "further shall you go;" don't you think it a grand thing to climb to the top, or go through it, or remove it?"

"Is Selina my hill of difficulty?"

I blushed, and began to be abashed at the rate into which I had hurried my over-night intentions.

"It is a weakness with some people to imagine they can always act in peculiar positions better than the persons placed therein. Don't get into that habit, or you will become a very disagreeable woman, Nellie."

I thought so too in my heart, and said no more. Miss Seymour left me at two o'clock, for her mother was not well; she kissed me, though, as she bid me good bye, and said, "I will examine the height of my hill of difficulty, and see if anything can be done to remove it, more than I have tried."

I thought she was very good-natured to me,

and I was still full of this idea, when the door opened, and in walked Isabel and Aunt Scann.

"Now," thought I, "having got very well out of my business with Miss Seymour, why should I not go on with my Sunday intentions, and scold Isabel?"

"Selina is very ill," I began, as if in answer to Isabel's look around, searching for her.

"Well or ill, she must see Aunt Scann; I have brought her on purpose," answered she, haughtily.

I felt very grand myself, and quite determined not to be out-done in loftiness, so I said, "It is impossible."

Whereupon, Isabel, just bestowing a look of wonder on me, which dissolved into one of disdain, took me up in her arms, and placed me on the top of an ebony cabinet.

Fortunately Neale came in; she had spied Miss Berrington get out of the cab, and came to unburden her mind.

Under the shower of her reproaches, Isabel

grew tearful, and Aunt Scann bewildered. Dissolving views are wonderful things, but nothing to equal the change in a mind that has the same circumstances brought before it, under a different aspect.

Aunt Scann had entered the room with her most solemn visage on ; this was gradually changing into one of pity and sorrow, and I saw that shortly she would have much ado to prevent herself embracing Neale, and saying she would have done exactly the same in her situation.

“ My uncle used to tell us, Isabel, that few people live to twenty, and beyond, who do not commit some great error in their lives ; and this event, which in some measure colours the greater part of their existence, is not meant to be mocked at and scorned by their fellow-creatures, but is to act the part of a warning beacon to the heart : those were his very words.”

“ They were, Nellie.”

“ Why do you tease Selina, then ? Why

not let her one error, or mistake, or whatever it may be, rest between God and herself? You cannot mend it."

"Do you know what it is?"

"No; but it is something in which her mother is more to blame."

"Shocking situation," said Aunt Scann, whose usual volubility seemed to have deserted her. "I think I must tell my nevey, my poor nevey."

"He is here to be pitied, aunt, if he requires it," and my guardian stood amongst us. A pleasant smile was on his lips, but his eyes looked anxiously round.

"My young lady is very ill, she has had one of her former attacks," interrupted Neale.

"Whose fault?" said my guardian, sternly.

Isabel was crimsoning with shame, as well she might; there was no need to scold her any more, for it was sufficient reproof to meet the clear, calm, good eyes of my guardian.

"My dear nevey, it is no one's fault—your unfortunate situation——"

"Mine? my dear aunt, what again an object of your pity? Pray spare me, or keep it until I am in greater want of such a commodity. My wife is in the drawing-room" (she was not, though, she was listening at the door), "I came up stairs on purpose to tell you that we had returned from Erith, and brought some letters for you from my mother."

So the interview, meant to have been the source of so much good by me, was brought to an abrupt conclusion. The leave-taking was, however, long enough to enable Lady Maria to get safely down to the drawing-room.

After dinner she sent for me, and proceeded to make enquiries as to the cause of Selina's attack.

Having shortly and decisively shown that I was not present, and could therefore give her no information, she spared me further questioning. But she declared it her firm conviction that Selina was in reality afflicted in the brain, and

it required but a few more of these attacks to render her permanently insane. She had endeavoured to convince Captain Forest, but all in vain ; and she considered it highly necessary, if he spoke to me on the subject, that I should tell him the same.

I was ready to exclaim with Aunt Scann, —“ What an unfortunate situation I am in, for I feel sure she intends me to speak to him, and means also to overhear the conversation.”

Another leaf unfolded itself in the bulk of experience, now beginning to swell largely, in this house of strange things, and that was, that frankness and truth were a match for any amount of evil.

So I said, “ Selina is unfortunate, and not insane, and my guardian can see that as well as I can.”

“ ’Tis her vile temper, not her misfortune,” exclaimed Lady Maria, “ I am never to have any

peace ; my children are just like their father, and will be the death of me."

Her children ! Now, where were the others ? and why did Selina never tell me she had any brothers or sisters ?

CHAPTER XVIII.

“Rumour is painted full of tongues I wis,
And they do know her well who thus depict her.
She is the sister unto babbling Echo—
Their common parentage is empty sound,
Therefore give ear not unto flying Rumour.”

OLD PLAY.

I AWOKE in the morning, very full of Lady Maria's unknown children. I had been dreaming in the night that they were all insane, in mad-houses, or doing something strange and odd.

However, I forgot them for a little while ; reading a letter from Isabel, very penitent and sorrowful, charged full of loving messages to Selina, when she was fit to receive them, beseeching me to write, and let her know how she was

going on, and winding up with a peroration very like one of my uncle's, good, pithy, and strong ; with a blessing on myself included.

So I felt pleased with Neale and myself, concluding, of course, that our wisdom had brought Isabel to this desirable state of mind.

As I told Neale of Miss Berrington's kind and sensible letter, Lady Maria's insane unknown children flashed across my mind, and I thought I would question her.

" 'Deed she knew nothing about 'em, and had never heard of any, but Miss Glynne."

Here was a mystery, looming out most awful from the shadows of doubt and secrecy.

" Nellie, you are like the veriest baby to-day," murmured Miss Seymour, in wrath ; " that is the third time I have told you the same thing."

" I beg your pardon ; I am thinking so much of Lady Maria's unfortunate children."

" Unfortunate children ! my dear, you are bewildered."

"No ; she said last night to me, her children would be the death of her."

"Of course she alluded to Selina as one, and her son as the other, Nellie."

"Her son ! and has Selina a brother ? is he older or younger than she is ? Why does she not speak of him ? Why does he not live here ?"

"Hush, Nellie, ask no more questions."

"Oh, yes, just a little more. Does Selina love him ? Why does no one speak of him ?"

"Because he is a very bad man, of whom none speak, because none can say good of him."

"That may be Lady Maria's fault ; she says Selina is insane, and she may say he is wicked."

"Very true, Nellie ; but I believe she has some reason for her judgment of him ; his own father disinherited him, not even mentioning his name in his will."

"Lady Maria says so."

"You silly child, the will speaks for itself. He is several years older than Selina, and she

knows very little of him, because he was so unmanageable, he never could be borne at home. Lady Maria always desired his tutors to keep him at school; but a strange eccentric old gentleman, the head of the family, who lived in Ireland, always came for him, and took him back to the very day, taking no denial.

“ That shows he did not find him unmanageable, Miss Seymour.”

“ I fear, my dear, they were congenial spirits.”

“ Then, if I had been his mother, I would have borne with his waywardness, rather than that he should have been in society thus unfit.”

“ Nellie, Nellie, in a passion.”

“ Yes, Miss Seymour; for perhaps this wild and naughty man has some good in him. Ought not his mother to have found it out, and cherished it, fostered it? I do not like Lady Maria; I hear nothing good and right of her, and I see nothing.”

“ Hush, Nellie! judge not! I do not mean to take Lady Maria’s part; but still you must

allow a wild son is a heavy charge on a mother that is widowed."

"She could have done her duty, and died, if it had proved too hard. Where is her son now?"

"After leaving the Military College, where his father had placed him, he went to live entirely with this old relative, whose heir he is by law. From thence he went into the army. I believe they quarrelled. At all events his regiment went to India, and there it is now; and everybody seems satisfied that there it should remain."

"I don't think they quarrelled. I think he was of an independent spirit, and would work."

"Perhaps so, Nellie; I wish to give every one their due; and I feel he is to be pitied as well as his sister. Indeed, but for such interest in her, I never would have entered this house."

"She loves you, and is grateful."

“ She wearies and vexes me by her folly. She forgets that the life of a governess is hard and thankless. It is provoking to find the sense of a child under the form of a woman ; I would rather teach you—”

“ But what a fine mountain of difficulty !”

“ Pooh, child ! I can perceive you would be very saucy, if I let you. See what time we have wasted idly talking. Translate this fable tidily, and I'll tell you the first step. I shall take up my mountain.”

I did my translation more than tidily ; it was an artistic piece of work.

“ You are rightly named Uriel, Nellie ; you beguile out of people all you wish. Now listen.—After your remark the other day, Miss Impertinence, about the mountain, I took a mental survey of all my pupils, and found that very few among them were alike, yet all had some individuality. One was clever in all she undertook ; another was stupid in learning by rote—quick in music or drawing ; a third could not spel

but was an extraordinary arithmetician. You are a stupid little thing in many ways,—having no language at command, yet making the piano speak. While you provoke me with not being able to do a sum, you mould a bit of mud into a likeness. Thus my pupils are differently gifted, and I set to work to find out Selina's. This is my first step up the hill of difficulty. I shall forgive you pointing out my path of duty if I discover I am right. But I must ask you a few questions.—You perceive Selina is not clever?"

" She seems very indolent, and must have been at a bad school; she slurs over everything so."

" My dear child, she was sent to the very worst school any mortal could have fixed on for a pretty, silly girl, situated on the confines of Portsmouth. Poor dear thing, I ought to have borne with her better. Well, to go on,—have you noticed that she does one thing better than another?"

" She reads aloud well."

"Good child, so she does. Now have you noticed what she likes to read best?"

"Poetry ; and she is a very good judge of it, too, and finds out false quantities and unmusical measures, and is very learned on the matter."

"My dear child, you have mounted me a dozen steps up the hill of difficulty. When she is well, we shall see what we shall see. I am not fond of poetry myself, my life is too matter-of-fact ; but I think Selina has a taste for it, which we will foster into full bloom. She shall dedicate her first sonnet to you."

"And it shall be about the hill of difficulty."

I rode with my guardian that afternoon. Lady Maria was at the window kindly kissing her hand as we rode off. I knew I should be asked in the evening upon what we discoursed.

I was longing to ask my guardian if he knew Lady Maria had a son. I did not think she would allude to such a person.

So I ventured boldly—

“ I did not know until yesterday that Selina had a brother.”

“ He seems a very brave fellow,” answered my guardian ; “ he has been mentioned in both the last despatches from India.”

“ I knew it,” said I.

“ How ?” asked he, smiling.

I stammered, and could only say—“ I felt sure he was brave.”

Upon which my guardian said—

“ I believe he has all the requisites to make a fine character but one, and the want of that one mars the whole.”

I did not like to hear anything against Lady Maria’s unfortunate children, so I asked my guardian if he knew a poet.

“ A poet, little Nell—indifferent, or a Longfellow ?”

“ Oh, a pretty good one, sir, and young and handsome.”

“ And if I do know one, what then ?”

" Cannot you invite him to the house, and ask him to ride out with us sometimes ? "

" When must he be caught, Nellie ? " asked he, his whole face glowing.

" Oh, in a week or two."

" I like the idea very much, and will set a trap for one immediately."

I was not so little or inexperienced but that I could see my guardian defined it all, and was highly pleased. But Lady Maria wondered what such a child had to say about a poet.

CHAPTER XIX.

" Truth, though it trouble some minds,
Some wicked minds, that are both dark and dangerous,
Preserves itself."—BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

IN fact Lady Maria after all was a very silly woman. I, fourteen years old and a half, thought very contemptuously of her: and though my guardian was so nice, I did not think very highly of him, as my bud of experience continued to unfold, and I thought what could be his share in Selina's unhappiness? I had never read any novels or romances, and so was not very capable of putting all the stories I heard together, and making one grand whole. I only saw that Lady Maria was very false, personally and mentally—

my guardian very good and frank, but in quite a wrong position : he must certainly be twenty years younger than Lady Maria. Selina very unhappy, and these two the cause of it. Now on this morning, just as I was thinking my guardian was not so perfect as I had first thought him, Neale brought me a parcel from him, with his love.

In it were six books—Longfellow's Poems ; ditto, Mrs. Barrett Browning's ; Tennyson's "Princess ;" and three volumes of selections of "Beautiful Poetry," charmingly bound in green and gold.

"Well, to be sure, he is a grand giver is the Captain, I must say !" said Neale, "and all full of hymns, them things as my young lady is so fond of."

"Yes, Neale, for me to read aloud to her."

"That you shall this evening then, for she is a sight better, and wants a bit of 'musement.'

"Of whom are you speaking ?" said a voice behind us.

Neale, of course, gave a little surprised shriek.

I told Lady Maria that Selina was so much better, Neale said I might read aloud to her in the evening.

"Where is the parcel Captain Forest sent you?"

"It contained these books."

"For whom were they sent?"

"To me, with his love."

She examined them all at the first page, as if to see whether any name was written there.

Mine was in all six. Such nice handwriting, firm and clear, with a very gentlemanly look about the characters.

"Poetry is the last thing I should recommend for a young lady's studies, and so I shall inform Captain Forest."

I did not like to look at Neale after she was gone, because I knew if she was not expressing her feelings by words, she was very fond of acting them by signs. What picture ever was

so fair and fragile as my Selina, when Neale brought me into her room ? I had been reading little bits, here and there, of my new books, ever since Miss Seymour had left me, preparatory to reading them aloud to Selina in the evening, so that I was quite poetically inclined, and ready to exclaim as I saw her—

“ Who hath not proved how feebly words essay,
To fix one spark of Beauty’s heavenly ray ?
Who doth not feel, until his fading sight,
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess,
The might, the majesty of Loveliness ? ”

That is Byron’s ; but I think I like Shakespeare’s description better. When he speaks of Portia—but I am forgetting Selina.

I was not allowed to let her speak much, and after perceiving she was really glad to see me, I sat down on a cushion, by the side of her couch. For an hour, I read little bits here and there ; once or twice she corrected me ; at the end of that time Neale bid me go.

The next day she was sitting up in a chair, and a soft light of pleasure came into her eyes, when she saw me with my green books.

"I had a pleasant night, Nellie, dreaming of your childish murmuring voice. It was so soothing."

So I stayed all the evening, and chattered as well as read.

When I wished her good night, Selina touched two marks on my forehead and cheek.

"How came these marks, Nellie? the blood must have flowed."

"It was an accident," I answered, getting red.

Selina looked sorrowfully at her own delicate slender fingers.

"I know those marks," she murmured, "Neale has them sometimes."

And two large tears, like crystal drops out of a fountain in Eden, fell from her eyes.

No pilgrim at a shrine, no mother for her child, no lover to his mistress, ever vowed

stronger love than I did, in my heart, for this dearest, sweetest, saddest victim.

And she knew I felt it.

"Nellie loves me!" I heard her say to Neale,
"one person does not despise me."

"Despise you, indeed! Let me see the person as does do it!" Neale's language was not pretty when she was angry.

On Saturday evening we were united once more, Selina, Isabel, and I, and to do full honour to the event, Miss Seymour drank tea with us. It was her intention to try and surmount her hill of difficulty this evening.

In vain we discoursed upon, and quoted all the most lovely bits of poetry; Selina, though blooming and well almost, was abstracted and moody.

"Of what are you thinking?" at last Miss Seymour asked.

"Of Nellie. She loves me, and I like her love, but I cannot take it until she knows my story."

"She is too young!" exclaimed Miss Seymour, aghast at this unexpected answer.

"She is not so young as we think. Has she told you of her queendom, and what rules and ordinances she holds there."

"Let us hear about it, Nellie."

So, thinking it best to divert the conversation from that dangerous topic, somewhat excited by the numberless events that had been lately occurring, very full of Selina's love and affection for me, I entered into the private history of all my thoughts, after the manner of any other little conceited, pedantic Miss in her teens, the excitement growing with my words. Miss Seymour listened in profound silence, Isabel now and then laughed, but Selina encouraged me.

At last said Miss Seymour.

"Most wonderful is this kingdom, especially for the growth of one plant, and that is called Self-complacency. Now, Selina, you are doing this child a great deal of harm; she is

already more than half spoiled, she was so before she came to us ; and if you do not help me to keep down her exuberant fancy to its proper level, she will become a very presuming girl, and a disagreeable woman."

Both Selina and Isabel were kind enough to exclaim against such a terrible character, while tears of mortification filled my eyes.

" Now this fine queen is worth nothing if she cannot endure sitting on a sober chair, for a short space, instead of her self-constituted throne. She will be driven from that by her own subjects, some day, rudely and unexpectedly. Nellie, you know a skilful physician cuts deeply. Your childhood, your isolated condition, every thing has contributed to prevent your being a real child, happy and careless. The weight of thought came upon you early. I find no fault with Selina for prizes your affection, as you have a true little heart ; but I deprecate and forbid your being treated as her equal in sense and years. Take your place as the little child

of the house ; when you have gained the position in which she wishes to place you by experience and years, none will accord it to you sooner than myself."

I dried my tears, tried to look pleasant, took a stool, sat at Selina's feet and played at "Sолitaire."

Miss Seymour commenced talking to Selina and Isabel of various topics of the day, and they, somewhat abashed at her severity as it seemed towards me, were slow in answering ; but nothing hindered her, she made them talk merrily at last.

Though I did not speak, I yet smiled in sympathy, and presently Miss Seymour lifted up my face to hers, and said :

" We must allow this little queen has a great deal of that fine plant, Good Humour, in her kingdom."

CHAPTER XX.

“A drainless shower
Of light is poesy, ‘tis the supreme of power,
‘Tis might half slumbering on its own right arm.”

KEATS.

So we spake no more on that matter, and Miss Seymour proceeded to climb up her other hill. When she, with kind and good words paved the way towards inviting Selina to try her talent for versification, the dear Selina smiled.

“I have very often,” answered she, blushing as if rose leaves were leaning against her cheek. “But you despised poetry, Miss Seymour, and I was ashamed to show you my efforts.”

I do not know which I liked best. To see Selina's bashful pleasure, as she read to us her sonnets, or Miss Seymour's happy and acknowledged humility as she listened.

"Miss Seymour," said Selina, "you do not know what good even trying to compose these little foolish things do me. I have food for thought, and if they are really worth repeating, as you so kindly say they are, I think—yes, I feel sure, I can do much better. When I hear a pretty thought, I feel compelled almost to put it into rhyme, and if you will not think me conceited, give me a subject, and I will try."

"The hill of difficulty," she answered.

"No," said Isabel, "harsh or unjust censure."

Selina smiled, as in deprecation, answering,—

"All gifts of grace are not alike ;
Almighty God alone can tell,
Amid the various ways of men,
Who doeth ill or well."

E. H. R.

"I allow," exclaimed Isabel, "nothing can be more beautiful than that;" and added, "you were pleased with what the old woman said, Selina, the last time you went with me to Kensington Gardens. We met her by the gate, you remember, and you remarked she must have been very handsome in her youth."

"The old garden woman; yes, she overheard me, and answered, 'God's work was very fair.'"

"It is to be dedicated to Nellie," said Miss Seymour, "I promised it to her as a reward."

"Nellie shall be the old woman then."

"My dear, my dears, here's news; my nevey, Captain Forest, my dear and valued nevey, is made a junior lord of the Admiralty, and that situation is nearly as good as a senior lord's. Indeed, for my part, I do not know the difference, as of course in my situation it is not very likely I should."

Thus did Aunt Scann burst in upon us that Saturday night; we, strung up to the highest pitch of poetical flights, and therefore no wonder

we took a little time to come down, and bring our common every-day wits to bear upon her news.

Selina recovered first. With diffidence, certainly, but her eyes all clear and calm, she said, "Shall we go down and offer our congratulations?"

Miss Seymour felt there was no more need of reproofs and warnings. The spoilt child was about to disappear, and a dignified, yet humble girl, take her place. I wish I had been a painter, sculptor, poet, historian, anything to pourtray the grace and prettiness of Selina's look and attitude.

So we all went down, Aunt Scann delighting in the idea, and buzzing out her pleasure like a hive of bees. Old Admiral Hartly was there, as well as Lady Hartly, and it was deemed very pretty and right of us to come flocking in with our congratulations.

My guardian insisted upon our all remaining

down, if it was not too much for Selina, both to celebrate her recovery, and his honours.

Never before, I think, was that drawing-room so healthily noisy ; and in the thick of it, my guardian whispered to me, that he had been introduced to a poet at his club, but he did not hear him spoken of as a very good one. Besides, he had weak eyes, and feeble hair.

“Otherwise, Nellie, I would have brought him in my pocket.”

“I am very glad you did not, sir, because now I must have a very good one, a Mr. Tennyson, almost.”

“ You are very exorbitant.”

“The child is extravagant ; you have been buying a new carpet for your room, I hear,” said Lady Maria.

“I am glad it was not lollipops or dolls,” answered the new junior Lord of the Admiralty. I call him thus, this time, instead of “my guardian,” because he did not look like him. For the first time I had ever seen him

he appeared annoyed. Lady Maria is very startling in her mode of being close to one when one thinks she is at the other end of the room ;—and as if I had not given up dolls !

Now I wonder if either of us could have made such poetry as this—in a day, too, though of course I did not give my opinion until Miss Seymour asked me herself.

OLD NELLIE.

“ I met her coming through the wood,
As resting ’neath a solemn fir ;
A moment by the stile she stood,
And I stood still to look at her.

“ With calm and venerable grace
She stayed—methinks I see her now ;
Old Time had gently stroked her face,
And left his blessing on her brow.

“ And in her shining auburn hair
Was scattered many a silver thread ;
Each marked, perchance, some byegone care,
Some bitter grief, some hope long dead.

“ And from her hazel eyes serene
A soft and holy light was shed ;
‘ How beautiful you must have been,
When you were young and gay,’ I said.

“I looked upon her face the while,
No token of surprise was there ;
She answered with a quiet smile,
‘Oh yes, God’s work was very fair.’”

E. H. R.

For my part, I found it a very good and refreshing thing to think of pretty subjects on which Selina might exercise her poetical genius. And I agreed with her heartily, when she said, “Such things were to the mind, what food is to the body. I shall soon wonder, Nellie, how people can live, without the enjoyment of such work, such thought.”

“Poetry is like yourself; to be truly good, it must be refined and graceful. That is the reason, I suppose, one never hears of vulgar poetry.”

“Vulgar! what a word—never let me hear you use it again.”

“Or you will write a poetical essay on my bad manners.”

“Nellie, you are becoming much more merry than you used to be.”

" God is so good to me. I am working my way home with such pleasant labourers. Will you ride to-day ? my guardian has gone from home for a week, and we may go without fear of a fuss."

In general, when we went out riding, if Captain Forest was not with Lady Maria, we had various impediments thrown in our way, or were sent to some unknown road on some bootless errand, or were cross-questioned when we returned, in a way that would have done honour to a Grand Inquisitor, it was so skilfully managed to entrap an innocent answer.

We had a very pleasant ride, and I think we must have passed the indifferent poet. His eyes were very weak, and his hair very limp, and his thoughts far away.

CHAPTER XXI.

" In his words

There was an athletic sinew, though they played
With great things carelessly, as a fresh wind
Provokes the sea to laughter ; and his pride
Ever seem'd well placed, like a castle set
Upon a mountain."—BEDDOES.

WHEN my guardian was from home, Lady Maria was so discreet, she never ventured out of her own boudoir, except for her drive in the Park. Miss Seymour had taken a little holyday, so Selina and I made use of the house, as two kittens who gambolled and delighted in a sunny bank.

I was always allowed the use of a small room which in good little books, of an age gone by, is

generally designated as a “light closet,” or the “china room.” It was situated beyond the inner drawing-room, and would have served for a landing or lobby on the staircase, had it not been made into a room. Here I was allowed to keep what Neale called my putty paste, or in other words, all my modelling apparatus.

I was designing a figure, which was by no means to be seen until advanced to a certain degree of completion. So while I modelled, Selina played and sung in the room adjoining mine. Sometimes I sang too.

Thus we were in full carol, when the door opened, and the butler, with a red and somewhat offended face, announced,—

“A gentleman.”

I could just see, through my door, Hughes’s inflamed visage: and whether he was angry (for he was apt to be high and mighty with the “young ladies,”) with us, for not being better prepared for visitors, or was indignant with the visitor himself, I could not determine. The

room was still ringing with the sound of our voices.

If the butler was angry with the visitor, it was clear the visitor was utterly unconscious of the fact; for he entered the room with the air and manner of one on extremely good terms with himself; so as to be indifferent to—or careless of—any opinion but his own.

“Miss Glynne, I presume?” he said, with the utmost ease. The tone of his voice was so strong and mellow, I thought he spoke in my ear.

The butler stared, and became still more red.

“You may go, my good friend,” said the unknown. “I shall wait here, until Lady Maria returns from her drive. That is, with your permission, madam,” turning to Selina, and bowing with the solemnity and grace of a cavalier; but I thought half in mockery.

“Sir,” answered she to the bow, “your name—you are a stranger to me—”

"I can sit in the other room, if you wish it."

"No; oh, no," answered Selina, quickly.
"You can go, Hughes," she continued to the
servant; who did so rather reluctantly.

For my part, I concluded this was a real poet,
and was pleased he should see how sweet and
amiable Selina was.

He looked like a poet in some things. Perhaps he was a little too tall, and, moreover, he appeared to me very powerful, with a great broad chest. No wonder such a voice came out of it. But he had very black hair, all waved and curling, after a foreign fashion, and he had a wonderful forehead, with great black brows knitted over a pair of eyes that might belong to some Barbary steed, flashing with the light of high spirit and blood. His nose was handsome and straight, looking out from beneath the black brows, and above the thick moustache, as if cut in stone. I could see from where I was, that his chin had, that indelible mark of a haughty and firm spirit, a cleft in it.

"Surely," said I, "this is the Poet; he is as handsome as a troubadour. I wish he may be good-tempered and not laugh at Selina's sonnets, for I think if he says, 'I love you—you're mine,' she will not dare to say 'no.'"

He drew forward a chair, opposite Miss Glynne, and then sat down upon it, as if it was a throne, he the king and she the world on which he was going to place his kingly foot.

Selina began to be nervous, I could see; in fact, her lips were forming to say "Nelly," when he, the stranger, said, having modulated his great voice down into quite a liquid softness,—

"You are the same I remember as a child. Beautiful, but I trust not false, hollow, despicable."

The utmost flight of poetry could not have astonished Selina more than this speech; but, without heeding her, he continued,—

"I thought I heard two voices, as I ascended the stairs."

She gladly called me ; and I quickly divested myself of my working pinafore and joined her. A poet, of course, was not like other men. No one, least of all Selina and I, could expect him to act like a common mortal. Nevertheless, on my approach, he looked as much astonished as if he had been a simple man.

A red glow covered his face, as he asked, in a peremptory, yet suppressed voice,

“ Your sister ?”

Now, Selina was one of those timid species of persons who succumbed at once to an arbitrary and commanding manner, and, while I should have been tempted to waive his right to ask such a question, she was already answering it.

“ No ; she is a ward of Lady Maria’s.”

A laugh, low, but strong in scorn, came from his lips ; then he said,

“ What parent was so mad as leave a trust like her in such hands ?”

Selina’s gentleness vanished before the rudeness of this speech ; while the implied taunt

upon the conduct of my dead parents caused a commotion in my heart such as had never stirred it before.

“Sir, your manner is offensive——” began Selina.

“That is very likely, but such as it is, you must bear with it. Tell me, what sort of man is your amiable papa-in-law?”

Selina flushed the brightest crimson, and trembled beneath his keen glance. There was an ominous pause; I could not recover from the effects of his first speech.

“Is he kind to you?” asked the unknown in a voice now so deep and concentrated, I did not wonder to hear Selina exclaim,—

“Yes, oh yes, he is everything most good, most kind”—she looked at me, for help.

“My guardian is very good to us both, and does all he can to make us happy,” I said, as clearly as I could.

The unknown smiled a strange half melancholy smile, as he turned to me, and said,—

"Ah, that is the voice I heard; speak again."

But I could not, even had I been able; for Hughes again appeared, and casting a suspicious glance all round the room, as if to see nothing was missing, said,—

"My lady has returned, sir, and bids me say she receives no gentleman in her private apartments."

"Be kind enough to tell her ladyship I have not the slightest wish to intrude in her private apartments. I can await her leisure here."

Hughes was beginning to look the stranger over, with an idea of resenting something; but catching his glance, he grew very red, retreated, and shut the door after him, with a bang.

Clearly this could not be the poet, or if he was, he would never suit Selina; she was trembling under his gaze even now.

"Is Captain Forest your guardian, jointly with Lady Maria?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't sir me. Do I look like a cringing fool, or a grinning ape, to be sir-ed?"

Selina sat down appalled, but I was angry, and said—"No, sir." He looked at me for a moment, as if to resent the stress I laid upon the obnoxious word; then his stern countenance changed into one of kindness, and even mirth. He rose, and bowed in the most stately manner, "I know not from what race you derive your being, little Peri, but call me what you will, and forgive my bearishness. I would not offend one of the Fairies for the world."

I knew he was mocking me, and was at a loss what to say, when Hughes again appeared. This time he seemed to have leave and license to express his sentiments, for he began in somewhat loud and uncivil tones, to say—

"Sir, my lady won't hear of no such a thing as seeing a person—"

"A what!" asked the unknown. Hughes grew pale at the quiet emphasis with which this was said.

"A—a—gentleman, yes, sir, a gentleman.
My lady will not hear of such a thing."

"I have not yet the honour of knowing what
thing her ladyship cannot hear."

"You, sir—seeing you, sir."

"I can exist very well without seeing her, as
she does not wish it, be good enough to tell her
ladyship. And hark ye, order my room to be
prepared. I will have the one down stairs,
leading from the inner dining-room ; the one
with the skylight, do ye hear?"

This last question was necessary, for Hughes
was transfix'd with amazement and indig-
nation.

"Sir, I do not hear. I am amazed. I can
take no such message to her ladyship. I must
have your name, sir, or you leave the house,
sir."

The unknown smiled. He was very hand-
some when he did so. Even Hughes could not
avoid bowing, and becoming as bland as possible,
amid all his anger.

Soft and deep, like the note of an organ, was the stranger's voice, as he said,—

“ Tell Lady Maria, her son awaits her presence here.”

“ Glynne, Neville, my brother, oh! my brother”—and Selina rushed into his arms, held out to receive her.

“ Are you indeed [my brother?]” she gasped out, looking up into his face, half in awe, half in delight.

“ Yes, Selina, I am your brother. I should have known you anywhere. You are very pretty, but rather too like Lady Maria to please me. You were six or seven years old when last we met.”

“ Oh, my brother, my brother, I have loved you always, pined for you, wanted you—God alone knows how much.”

“ I dare say, child, but nevertheless I could have been of little service until now. If I find you a good little girl, with no humbug or nonsense about you, I'll be your friend for the future.

What has become of that little thing with the mysterious eyes? Is she a myth really?"

I had retreated to my den, not to interfere with the first feelings of meeting between the long-estranged brother and sister.

Hughes had remained turned to stone for a few moments, but even he had recovered his wits, and gone.

So I expected every minute to see Lady Maria flying in, but Selina had time to exchange many words, while I thought—volumes.

"So this is the bad son, for whom I have felt so much, and for whom I need feel no more. He is an iron man. He will require us to do to the minute what he wills. It is to be hoped he is not so bad as they say. He is certainly sincere—he did not spare Lady Maria. She has wronged him, and she is afraid to see him, and dare not come. Well, perhaps his coming will be better for Selina than that of the poet. Though he does not seem to care much for her caresses, he appears inclined to be her friend. I suppose

he is like his father. I wonder if he and my guardian will like each other. Mr. Glynne will be in fault if they don't. He puts me in mind of a great Egyptian king, full of power and pride. But I like his voice, it is very expressive, and without a harsh note in it."

I could see the door gently opening.

"Now those two will be overheard," thought I.

Not so; he either heard or saw immediately, and rose up, with a stately air, that was grand to behold.

Either from agitation or effect, Lady Maria's voice, as she came forward with outstretched arms and said, "Neville, my dear boy, my long absent son, welcome," was like the feeblest little chirp I ever heard. No sound of welcome or heartiness in it.

She made as if to embrace him, but he only took her hand, and just touching it with his lips, said,

"We are such strangers, Lady Maria, I presume not to take the liberty of a favoured son."

And he bowed lower than ever, and I thought,
“The Fiend of Mockery dwells in that man.”

That Lady Maria should look disconcerted was not surprising ; but he handed her to a chair without appearing to notice it, and sitting down close to Selina, began to converse like any ordinary morning visitor.

“It is very hot weather, I am surprised to find you still in town.”

“Does it seem hot to you, brother ? have you not just returned from India?”

“I have just returned ; in fact, I imagined you prepared for my appearance, as the newspapers mentioned my being sent home with the dispatches.”

“It is true, Neville,” said his mother, “I ought to have been prepared. Captain Forest read me the news out of the paper, and of the battle, of your bravery, your wound——”

“And I never was told,” exclaimed Selina, with indignation. “Oh, brother, Neville, you are a hero; and I knew nothing of it.”

“ Every man is a hero at some period of his life, Selina, therefore do not grieve ; you may be as proud of me now as you like. I love being spoilt. Selina is very like you, Lady Maria.”

I thought perhaps he said this to turn the conversation, for Lady Maria looked very wretched and uncomfortable. But this remark appeared to make matters worse, and bring some unpleasant thoughts to mind.

“ Your sudden appearance has quite upset me, my dear son. I must retire.”

He led her to the door with the same overstrained courtesy he had received her, saying, “ You look charmingly—as young as ever.”

There was a touch of genuine nature in the look she gave him. It might be remorse, sorrow, pain, that lent for the moment a look of tenderness to her eyes, one not usual there.

As he closed the door upon her, Selina began to question him, with all the eagerness of her nature. She wept, she laughed, she caressed him, as her spirit moved her, and though I

could judge by his manner that he treated her as a spoilt little maiden, he did not seem to like her the less.

Nay, the more pettish she became at his indifference to her questions about himself, the more pleased he appeared, saying, "Genuine nature, at all events, my pretty Selina."

"But I was told never to mention your name, you were so naughty," she exclaimed, suddenly.

"Ha, ha ! was it so ? Well, I am just as bad now ; if anything, worse."

"I'll not believe it, Neville. What do you do ? what can you do, either mean or wrong ?"

"I swear, drink, flirt, gamble. I never go to church, laugh at all parsons, say no prayers, and think the devil either a very good fellow, or an imaginary personage."

As I heard him say this, I was convinced a great deal of this was true, he said it with such apparent satisfaction.

Selina imagined it all bravado. Her nature

was good and unsuspicuous. I was thinking of this sadly, as I progressed with my statue.

Suddenly a shadow stood between me and it; he was standing, looking at us both, with his searching eyes.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ Sin is establish’d subtly in the heart
As a disease ; like a magician foul
Ruleth the better thoughts against their will.
Only the rays of God can cure the heart,
Purge it of evil ; there’s no other way
Except to turn with the whole heart to God.”

W. ALLINGHAM.

THE drawing of my statue lay on the table ; it was the figure of a child with outstretched arms. Beneath was written, “ Fatherless, motherless ; she cried to God in her distress, and He heard her.”

He looked at me, the nearly completed statue, and the drawing.

“ You have forgotten the curls,” he said, at last.

"She has no time to curl her hair," I answered, hurriedly. Then I thought with shame that he had deemed the statue a likeness of myself, and in the rush of my aggrieved feelings, for all the most sacred and hidden thoughts of my heart seemed suddenly exposed to the rude gaze of this rough, proud stranger, I raised my chisel. But two or three blows, and the labour of weeks was useless, and my statue destroyed.

"Child," he said, with sternness, "I see you are mortal. You'll rue this deed."

And he turned away, his commanding air and stately way filling the little room with cold pride and haughtiness.

I ran up stairs quickly to my own apartment. I looked round it, but instead of my rose-covered walls answering me back with blushing pleasure, they seemed dull and heavy. Sighs appeared to come from the high-backed old chair. No shadow rested by the little bed that stared upon me in cold whiteness.

The kingdom within me had admitted a guest

hitherto a stranger to it, anger was reigning paramount there, and as I searched each nook and corner of my heart, I found indignation, remorse, and hatred attempting an entrance too.

My statue had been to me a holy, sacred pleasure; as it were, a memorial tablet to the memory of my parents. I considered the feelings with which I had, first, created the idea, secondly, executed it, as belonging wholly to Heaven and them. This had made me so jealous that any other eye than my own should look upon it. In a moment all was changed. With no leave, nay, with a want of common courtesy, a strange and disdainful gaze had fallen upon my Holy thing, and it became desecrated in my eyes. A worldly and sarcastic being had torn open the secret feelings of my heart, and I hated him. Oh, how I hated him. And I hated myself still more. Who has not experienced, who can forget the first battle of evil passions in the heart? I could not weep, I could not pray. Passionately I flung myself

on the bed, and from sheer inability to think more, fell heavily asleep.

I know not whether I dreamt of, or really heard a voice ; but a whispering sound floated round me.

“ ’Tis her first battle. She must conquer herself, or be lost.”

This was repeated again and again. I thought my mother’s voice said it to my father, and he answered back again.

“ God help me, I will conquer,” I answered, at last, and rose. I had been lying there more than two hours. I was still such a child, the sleep had refreshed me, as it would have done a restless, crying baby. I dressed myself for going down into the drawing-room, and then went to seek Selina. I looked back into my room, from the threshold of my door. It appeared brighter, more like my home—the roses on the wall seemed refreshed with dew, and their bright colours glowed with the setting sun. Selina was not there. I concluded she had.

dined down stairs with her newly-found brother.

I went straight into the little room, took up the pieces of my defaced statue, and kissed them ; I then took my chalks and paper and drew a new design. This time, the figure knelt for help and pardon, and the curls hung down as long and thick as my own. Selina came singing up the stairs, a sure sign she was happy. I ran to meet her.

“ Nellie, dear, how selfish I have been ; you ought to have dined with us. He is such a darling. Lady Maria has not a word to say ; she will never be able to tease me any more. But alas, the mischief is done.”

“ Now you must make a sonnet on the return of your brother,” interrupted I.

She laughed. “ Make a sonnet upon him ! how it would amuse him ; he would pull it to pieces in a moment, he is so satirical, so wonderfully clever ! As for Hughes, it was as much as he could do to wait at dinner. Glynne asked for beer in almost the same words

that he asked to see Lady Maria, looking gravely at him all the while; then tasting it, he turned, in his grand way, and said—‘Oblige me, sir, by removing this detestable stuff.’ I could not but laugh.”

“Why do you call him Glynne?”

“That is his name, what he will eventually be called when our old cousin is dead.”

“I like Neville better.”

“Here he comes!—did you ever hear such a step? Oh, Nellie, Nellie, what new life it gives one to have something to love!”

Mr. Glynne entered, and, without apparently seeing me, said—“Now, Selina, give me some music, otherwise I must borrow a latch-key, and go out to amuse myself.”

We sang and played, by turns and together, for more than an hour, during which time he sat lazily back in his chair, and only spoke to say “go on.” He did not seem to notice who played or sang, or what was either played or sang. We tried every kind,—gay, grave, solemn, and rattling.

At last Selina was tired, and left me to play by ear, for the evening was closing, and dusky shadows fell, one by one, over the room. This was a time in which I liked to play; no one could see my face, and my fingers could say what they pleased. Penitent and sorrowful thoughts flowed from them with high aspirations and solemn hopes for the future. Then came the soft and liquid melody of peace and harmony. I was startled out of all my thoughts by a voice close to me.

" You believe in Heaven, don't you ? "

" Yes ! " I omitted the obnoxious " sir ! "

" There music is to be the soul's enjoyment ? "

I could not answer this extraordinary speech.

" Such music would fill eternity ! Good night, children ! I have enjoyed the evening."

He was gone.

For two or three days Mr. Glynne took no notice of me, but he was very kind to Selina. During that time we never had so many visitors. All the world came to see the great hero, of

whose existence and triumphs we were almost ignorant a short time before. However, we made up for it now, and Selina's adoration fell short of worship.

Out of his own catalogue of sins, we discovered he had not misnamed some; for he swore terribly; he did not go to church on Sunday; and he drank a whole bottle of claret every day for dinner, and that in tumblers!—he said “wine-glasses were made for fools and women!”

He was always scrupulously polite to Lady Maria, condescendingly fond of Selina; but apparently showed it more to please her than himself; spoke to every person who came near him, whether he knew them or not, whether they were gentles or menials, and always with an air of entire satisfaction in himself; and yet it was neither a vain nor insulting air, but one that seemed to say—“I am myself—no more, no less.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

“The sea of fortune doth not ever flow—
She draws her favours to the lowest ebb.
Her tides have equal times to come and go ;
Her loom doth weave the fine and coarsest web.
No joy so great, but runneth to an end ;
No hap so hard but may in fine amend.”

R. SOUTHCOATE.

I WAS secretly curious to know whether my guardian and Mr. Glynne would like each other. I believe Selina had some such feelings also, but fortunately more on her brother’s account than Captain Forest’s.

Miss Seymour augured well from this.

We did not see the meeting; but after dinner, in the drawing-room, shaded by a friendly win-

dow-curtain, I made my observations. Selina always dined down-stairs now.

It appeared to me that my guardian was moved in his mind about something ; but it was not an uncomfortable feeling, for his eyes were bright, his countenance animated. While Mr. Glynne sat all the evening in a corner, his black brows meeting, his great, broad forehead corrugated with a frown, and his moustaches curling up in a stiff, sarcastic form ; from beneath his heavy brows there gleamed flashing eyes. Evidently Mr. Glynne's "imaginary personage" had full possession of him.

I noticed that if he was not scowling at Lady Maria, he was keenly investigating my guardian, and from him he turned a somewhat softened gaze upon Selina. I thought to myself, "He knows all about these people ; he has had some foolish man, Isabel, to tell him, or some friend has put himself in aunt Scann's situation." The whole of that evening he spent thus ; which conduct had the effect of visibly annoying his

mother, while Selina, conscious that he was present, required no other stimulus to be happy.

The next day, when I was in the studio, Mr. Glynne came in. I could not avoid colouring at the remembrance of the only time he had been there before.

"What sort of man is he?" he began, unceremoniously.

"He is very good," I answered.

"Always the same as he was last night?"

"Always."

"Do you think Selina suffers?"

"No; you will love her?"

"Humph! I love no one."

"But yourself," thought I.

"No, I don't love myself," said he, aloud.

I was aghast.

"You have eyes, child, that speak, however silent you may be. What is your name?"

"Nellie Offley, Mr. Glynne."

"Mister Glynne, ha! ha! What prompts you to herd me with the crowd of misters? It

proves how much I have been spoken of—thought of under the maternal roof. Don't Mister me. I presume I may call you Nellie?"

I assented, while I thought "What am I to call him? I seem always to address him wrong."

"Those who like and esteem me call me Glynne. I wish to be Glynne to you."

There was no trifling with him, so I said, almost involuntarily—

"Yes—Glynne."

It was wonderful what changes his countenance underwent. Last night, he looked like the Incarnation of Lucifer; now he was smiling like a schoolboy, and his voice and eyes were soft as a woman's.

"Did he wrong her, Nellie?"

"My guardian could not wrong any one."

"Lady Maria is in fault, then."

"Lady Maria can tell you."

"Selina seems a silly girl."

"I know many much more silly," said I, with indignation.

"Nevertheless, you deny not that she wants wisdom. How can I help her?"

"Love her."

"What shall I do to Lady Maria?"

"Leave her alone."

"And Captain Forest?"

"Trust him."

"This advice suits me well. I want to get away from all this 'bosh,' and go to the only friend I have in the world."

"In Ireland?"

"Yes; did you ever hear of him?"

"Once or twice."

"He has been father, mother, all to me. If he bid me die for him, 'twould be easy—for him. I'll leave to-day. Good-bye, Nellie. Remember me in your prayers."

What a mocking man!

I told Selina part of our conversation, and how I had again offended him about his name.

"Ah, yes! you ought to have been told he is 'Glynne of Glynne;' they never have Mister

attached to their name ; only he, poor fellow ! was disinherited. My father left everything to Lady Maria, even the old estate for her life. We are both dependent on her ; and besides, she may leave it all to whom she pleases."

" My guardian will make her be just."

" Yes, he will, meantime Glynne is better off than I am ; for the head of our family, the old Lord of Glynne, has adopted him. He must inherit the title, as he is the next heir."

" Did you ever see the Lord of Glynne ?"

" Yes, once at school. I never was so frightened. I saw a strange, wizened old visage staring at me over a hedge. Oh, how I screamed ! and he laughed. He said he came to see if I was alive or dead ; but he had no wish to see me again, I was so like Lady Maria.

" Then you may be sure Mr.—I mean Glynne —has caught all his rough manners from him."

" Rough manners ! I beg your pardon, Nellie, but to my mind, Glynne's manners are perfection."

“He is going away to see the old wizened man.”

“I will go with him.”

But when she proposed the plan to him,
Glynne would not hear of it.

“You will want a maid, and a waggon-load
of boxes ; I cannot travel with such things.”

“I will leave Neale behind, and take only one
box.”

“Then you will be a figure, and I shall hate
the sight of you ; besides, my uncle dislikes
women.”

“I will make him love me.”

“No, he saw you once, and you are so like
your mother, he will be damned if he goes a
yard to look at you again.”

“Hush, Glynne, dear Glynne !”

“Why hush ?”

“That was such an ugly word.”

“I always speak the truth ; that’s what he
said.”

So Selina stayed at home, and he went. No
sooner was he gone than it seemed as if he had

left the evil part of his nature in the possession of his mother.

She tormented us all; and while we told ourselves she was unbearable, we had an inward conviction one person in the house had much more to endure than we had. So for his sake even Selina curbed her feelings and forbore recrimination. Yet that was deemed no merit, but rather part and parcel of an hypocritical design upon Lady Maria's peace of mind.

That I was peculiarly suspected of something base and underhand was palpable, for even my own room, that haven to which I resorted on all occasions, became subjected to a surveillance as annoying as it was unavailing. I never went out of the house that I did not know every corner, every drawer, every part of my room would be searched—not a paper left unread, not a book unexamined.

It was a relief to us, as the sharp bit relaxed would be to the high-mettled steed, when an invitation came from my aunt to invite Selina and

myself to Willow Wood for the holidays. The consent to go was as joyfully given as asked.

We all travelled down together, Selina, Isabel, and I, with Neale for our protector, instead of aunt Scann. The contrast of the two journeys was great. Before, we were going from certain happiness to an uncertain fate. Now, we knew what we had to expect, and still better comprehended what we had left. Neale, in her way, helped to make the difference greater ; for unlike the vigilant aunt Scann, who saw, even in the porters, a lurking enemy, Neale gloried in the admiration her young ladies excited, and would have deemed it no more than due to them, if a score of young men had turned the steam-engine into a modern and temporary Juggernaut, in their efforts to catch a glimpse of such blooming faces. We arrived without accident, and had what Neale called "a royal welcome!"

How good I thought my uncle as he took Selina in his arms, and kissed her, as he did. Isabel and me, saying—"Excuse me, my dear,

all young ladies coming to my house are my daughters."

And how I thought my aunt no ways altered, as she treated Selina with the highest courtesy as a guest, curtseying with as much grace as lay in her power. And how pretty Selina looked, as she disdained the curtsey, and with a blush and a smile said—"Am I not to kiss my aunt?"

And how I was very nearly smothered by the children, until vigorously rescued by nurse, who, setting me up on a chair, said—"Bless her sweet eyes, they are just the same! and how you be growed!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ Our host hath spread beneath our tread
A broider’d velvet woof ;
Curtains of blue peep richly through
Our fretted palace roof :
‘ Well spent,’ say I, ‘ in forestry,
Each summer day like this.’ ”

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

“ So, my little Nellie, you have not spread
your wings, and flown ?”

“ No, uncle, I wished to see you again.”

“ Good child ! Have you found work to do,
and a purpose to live for yet ?”

“ I hope so, uncle.”

“ That is well. You are improved, my child,
in looks, and grown. I do not fear now that
you will leave us with sudden alacrity.”

"What do you mean, my dear Berrington?" exclaimed my aunt, greatly puzzled to put facts to what seemed fables.

"When Nellie was with us before, she was only half here. Now I can see by her eyes that dreams have given place to realities; each pinion has its earthly tie bound round it never to be loosened until its duty is performed."

"Nellie always did her best," said my aunt, apologetically. "I think Isabel handsomer than ever, and more like you, Berrington." This latter part was said in a whisper; but my uncle answered aloud—

"Thank you, my dear! It is hardly possible to say which is most complimented, Isabel or I."

What holidays we had!

The weather was beautiful; and the only theory in which my uncle indulged was, "Enjoy yourselves, my dears; run about, laugh, sing, and play all day."

And we did so. Selina won all hearts by her beauty, grace, and artlessness; while Isabel and

Georgy clung to each other as loving sisters, without a remembrance of their gusty childhood. We had pic-nics in the old forest ; and though my aunt had some misgivings as to the propriety of the thing, yet did my uncle insist upon inviting all the young people, far and near, to join.

“ My dear Berrington, the new curate is such a handsome man.”

“ And why should he not be so ?”

“ The girls—flirting—love, you know, and all that.”

“ And in our youth, did not we flirt and love, and all that ?”

“ Yes, certainly ; but suppose it should end in anything serious.”

“ That depends on what you call serious.”

“ Why, marriage, and—”

“ I am sorry you think marriage to be avoided ; it is too late now, my dear, to repent.”

Then could my aunt say no more in her

vehement desire to disclaim such an imputation.

The new curate was very handsome, and, what was better, he was very lively and agreeable. Nothing came amiss to him. He ran races with the children, went sketching with the young ladies, talked over the parish and "Convocation" with my uncle, wound my aunt's worsted, and seemed to do everything, but like poetry.

I could not discover the least trait of a poetic vein in him. He was matter-of-fact and sensible to the last degree, and I felt convinced would rather read a dry old homily than the finest sonnet in the world.

So Isabel and I felicitated ourselves upon hearing that another young gentleman was about to join our party, whose description answered every expectation we had formed. He was handsome, but of a refined appearance, unlike the robust and healthy curate; he was rich, and need not slave himself to death with schools,

clothing-societies, sermons, and old women. He was literary (was it poetically so ? an important question !) and had published something, but what, we could not learn. And above every thing, he had a very pretty name, Cecil Hamilton, very unlike the curate's, Richard Graham. We had absolutely heard my boy-cousins calling him "Dick."

When he came he nearly proved himself equal to the reports spread abroad, which showed he had some merit. He was not quite so handsome, that is he had a pretty little feminine face, but he was short, with a narrow chest, and weak legs. His eyes were beautiful, answering to the word spiritual ; his feet and hands very small, his dress perfection, and his manners quite "loveable," to use Georgy's phrase.

He was not at all too literary, too rich, or too fine to associate with us, and won my aunt's heart by saying, " If Miss Glynne were not present, Miss Berrington would be the handsomest girl in the room."

We wanted but one assurance, to make us quite happy ; for, girl-like, we had built a castle without the smallest anticipation of its being destroyed.

"One thing is certain," said Isabel to me, in high confidence, "we shall soon know; for I have always heard that poets cannot help talking of their own poetry, and running down other peoples'."

"That is rather a reflection upon the race, Issy; and though it may be applicable to Selina in the first sense, it not so in the second, for she will think the greatest trash better than her's."

"Mr. Hamilton already admires her greatly. Oh ! Nellie, if we only do succeed, then I shall think I have atoned for that dreadful business."

"It is a pity we did not know Mr. Hamilton before we saw Mr. Graham, because he would at once have taken care of Selina. Now it will be difficult to displace Mr. Graham, more especially as he is so strong and active, and can run by her pony, up hill and down dale, without fatigue. Now

Mr. Hamilton does not look strong enough for that. Besides, he is so slow ; Mr. Graham has put her on her pony before the other is even aware it has come to the door.”

“ That is because he is so occupied looking at her, he can see nothing else. And how pretty and healthy she looks. I don’t think she has thought of that, you know, once, or had a sighing fit.”

“ It is just as Neale said. For three years she was thinking only of one thing, and it was abruptly forced from her, and nothing given her in its stead. And she had not strength of mind sufficient to bear up, and find amusement for herself. Perhaps, in her situation, you and I would have behaved worse, Isabel.”

“ Perhaps,” answered Isabel, sorrowfully.

Isabel’s prognostications, as to Mr. Hamilton’s discovering his literary vein himself, proved correct.

One lovely evening, as we all sat under the

trees, he, looking at Miss Glynne, but talking to Isabel, said,

“ Your pretty friend has inspired me. Would you be kind enough to pass judgment on these poor lines, to see if I have done her justice. Perhaps you are aware I have published a few fugitive pieces—and may I present you with a copy ?”

As Isabel told us after, you might have knocked her down with a feather ; and she had the greatest difficulty in refraining from some open and not quite maidenly act on her part to express her delight.

But she smothered it all, until we were alone ; and then together we read, admired, and felicitated each other. Not but what I thought Mr. Hamilton’s poetry very poor—by no means equal to Selina’s. However, Isabel would not hear any disparaging remarks, but at once we were to go and divulge the interesting fact to Selina.

Certainly she smiled with surprise and pleasure when she heard that Mr. Hamilton was not

only a poet but had published his poems, and eagerly asked, whether we thought her's were worth showing to such a genius.

But when she read the lines upon herself, she was not half as charmed as we expected. The compliments, high-flown and extravagant, which would have turned the heads of half Isabel's school (she declared), were lost sight of entirely by Selina, and why?

In no less than three places, the metre did not run smooth, or, rather, correctly; there were two gross mistakes in grammar, and great clumsiness in the construction of the whole. And, above all, there was more than one word mis-spelt.

“ He had written it in a hurry, owing to his feelings,” pleaded Isabel.

But Selina was not at all more complaisant towards the printed volume, beautifully decorated and emblazoned, as it was, with a monograph of his initials, large enough for a coat of arms—

“ Oh! what stuff!” laughed she, all un-

wotting the pain she was inflicting upon us.
“ Why, it is just like himself—milk and water.
Mr. Graham and I were agreeing only yesterday,
that he was so limp and die-away, he ought to be
sent to the laundry and starched.”

Here was a terrible blow to us. She not
only laughed at his poetry, but at him. We
were so mentally knocked down ourselves in our
high expectations, that we felt the necessity of
starch too.

“ There, take it away, I cannot read any more
rubbish this evening ; for I have promised Mr.
Graham to learn the names of all these ferns
by to-morrow, and they are in Latin. Think of
that now.”

“ Perhaps Mr. Graham will do,” whispered I
to Isabel, as we sorrowfully departed.

“ Gracious goodness ! no, child,” answered
she, in a gust. “ He is as poor as a rat, and if
Selina falls in love with him, and they cannot
marry, and she is to have her troubles all over
again, what will become of us every one ?”

Truly the case was disheartening ; nevertheless I liked Mr. Graham better than Mr. Hamilton, and, at all events, falling in love with him could never have such a disastrous finale as——but on that subject I was not competent to judge.

Selina had no misgivings as to our showing her sonnets to Mr. Hamilton, which we thought of, as a last resource. And we were truly edified by his admiration of them.

“ Gracious heavens !” said he, with uplifted eyes, “ that such genius should be allied to such beauty !”

There was no doubt about it. Her’s was much superior to his, even to our limited poetical capacities.

CHAPTER XXV.

"And in mingled loves of lovers, the array of human ills
Break their gentle course to music, as the stones break
summer rills."—A. SMITH.

We two, Isabel and I, began to dislike Mr. Graham ; he was so happy, so hearty, so robust,—though he was running about from morning until night, and had apparently work enough (and he did it) for six people : he was always ready for everything, and always the life of every party.

While poor Mr. Hamilton, with nothing to do but make verses and love, was pining visibly away, he cast a gloom on every party, and damped all hilarity by looking just as if he were

going to burst out weeping. He was hopelessly in love ; and the reason we disliked Mr. Graham was because he laughed at him, and made Selina laugh too.

“ Mr. Graham thinks Mr. Hamilton wants to propose to me, and weeps because he has no opportunity ; what do you think, girls ? ” asked Selina.

“ Mr. Graham is very unfeeling ! ” exclaimed Isabel.

“ Oh, no, indeed, he likes the little man rather, and always says if it had not been for that unlucky volume of poetry, he would have been a worthy member of society.”

“ I thought you loved poetry and all that.”

“ Why, yes, I did a little ; but after all, what is the use of it ? One ought to be practical in these days, and not visionary.”

We knew that Selina’s nature was versatile, but really this was a flight ; or rather, we never calculated on her becoming sensible, or, in short, superior to us in wisdom and prudence.

Hitherto she had been an object of pity to us, as well as love ; a being to be coaxed, and petted, and borne with, as you bear with a wayward child.

And now she was going all alone, her leading-strings thrown aside, her two faithful props, ourselves, useless and in the way. Isabel was rather inclined to pout over this state of affairs, especially as poor Mr. Hamilton made her his confidante, and declared he must win Selina or die. In this perplexing situation she was debating to whom she should turn for advice, deeming me too young, when her bias in his favour turned quite round—she found he had made confidantes of every one. Even the schoolboy-cousins had been bribed to let him know when Selina strolled out, and where ; while the smallest child in the nursery was heard calling him “the lover.”

“There, my dear Berrington, I told you so ; something serious has happened. Luckily, I am always prepared for an affair of this sort, when young people are thrown together.”

"Then, my dear, you must be so experienced you will not require my advice."

"Yes, I do; in fact, the whole matter is one of the most perplexing and difficult I ever had to do with."

"I am all attention."

"Well! Mr. Hamilton is madly in love with Selina."

"Why should he be mad about it? If I was a young man, and had never seen you, my dear, I think I could not help falling in love with her myself."

"She is very pretty indeed, and so nice and affectionate. But though he is so desperately in love, she is not. And I do believe if he was to propose, she would refuse him."

"So would I, I think."

"Oh, Berrington, how can you have the heart to say so? I firmly believe, if she refuses him, he'll pine away and die."

"It is about the best thing he can do; he does not seem to me to be of much use in the world."

"I could not have believed you would be so uncharitable. But I have worse news still ;—I think Mr. Graham is also in love with her."

"Oh, I cannot spare him, he is too useful. I hope he shows no symptoms of decline."

"No, not one atom!—that is the only thing that makes me doubt his being in love. He eats and drinks all the same."

"Then he may fall in love as much as he likes."

"But, Berrington, don't you see the terrible consequences? He falls in love, and she falls in love; and how can they marry?"

"In the same way that other people do, I suppose."

"But the money! the money! On what are they to live?"

"Too true! Graham has nothing but his curacy; and Miss Glynne is, I fear, dependent on her mother; this is awkward."

"There! I told you so, but you would not listen to me."

"Perhaps you are mistaken."

Mrs. Berrington scouted the notion.

My uncle walked up and down the room musing.

"Little Nellie, what is to be done?" said he at last.

"If they love each other dearly, perhaps they will not mind waiting until Mr. Graham gets a living."

"An idea from Heaven! Kiss me, my dear wife. Bring me my stick, Nellie. I am a new man. Good luck to all lovers. And don't mar sport, Mrs. Berrington."

Mr. Hamilton, wound up to a pitch of misery unendurable, did propose, and was rejected; after which he recovered his spirits greatly, confiding to Isabel, that now he knew the worst, his feelings as a man and a Christian bid him forget and forgive her. At the same time a new impetus was given to his life. Henceforward he should devote his energies to the doing of some great

and noble deed, which, while it cut her to the soul, should elevate him to the highest pinnacle of her esteem.

All this Isabel thought very fine, and I supposed I ought to think so too.

But I applauded in my heart much more the silent, but expressive homage that Mr. Graham began to pay her. No offer was made; yet every look, word, and action bespoke the devotion of an honest, good man's heart. He rather repressed than courted any mark of favour or regard from her, while he let slip no opportunity of showing his own affection.

He seemed to take a pride in exalting her in every possible way, while he kept himself in the back-ground.

"A great sign of true love," I remarked to Isabel. "Mr. Hamilton was always thinking of his feelings or his poems."

"I think he ought not to behave as he does, without proposing," answered Isabel.

"Not so ; he has no home ; nothing to offer Selina at present but his heart, and no certain prospect. So he leaves her free, but, like an honest man, shows her what he will, and means to do when he can."

"You are a little goose!"

"Agreed!" I answered.

However, the time came for us to go away, and it was as well. My uncle was getting fidgetty about his beloved curate, whose command over his feelings began to tell on his robust frame. Selina was becoming ominously silent and solemn : Isabel and Georgy having outlived the charm of seeing each other once more, had resumed their childish quarrels : my aunt existed in dread of a frightful quarrel between the rejected lover and the tolerated one,—without the smallest foundation, however, for such an idea ; while the unhappy little man himself deserved and obtained from all quarters one universal epithet, and that was "tiresome."

So we returned to London all more or less sorrowful. We had no welcome, for no one was at home ; but I missed that less than not being allowed to resume the occupation of my own room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ Still for glittering locks and gaye,
Thou wilt ever cite the sonne ;
Here’s a simple tresse—I praye,
Hath he such a golden one ?”—ANON.

I WAS shewn into a little sort of attic lighted by a skylight. Small as I was, I ran the chance of inadvertently braining myself against a beam that cut off the bed from the rest of the room. All my most treasured possessions were scattered about in high confusion, and piled one upon another, as if to give visible evidence that there was not room for half of them in the space now allotted me. The servant who ushered me into

it coloured with shame, yet I said nothing, and did not even look surprised.

I felt convinced that some ulterior motive was the reason of the insult, and was as fully determined I would defeat the object by not considering it as such.

“ My lady thought Mrs. Hind looked ill, my lady settled she should have your room. Mrs. Hind was not willing”——

“ Mrs. Hind is quite welcome. You can give her back that friar and nun, and say they not only belong to her room, but I have no space for them here.”

“ Your bath, Miss Offley—I have been in such a way about that. Nowhere could I put it. But Mary and I have made a curtain, and hung it up here, just outside, in the little recess, going to our room, if you would not object.”

“ Not at all—it is a capital plan. I shall now be able to arrange all my things within, comfortably.”

“ God bless you, miss, for being a sweet young

lady, and bringing back Miss Glynne looking so well and beautiful."

"I think you need not mention to her and Neale that I have changed my room, they scarcely ever went into the other."

"Very true, Miss Offley, I won't; and indeed, as Mary and me were saying, we shall have good dreams, with a little angel sleeping next door."

"No," said I, "only a simple child." Miss Seymour would have given me a sugar-plum, perhaps, for that speech.

I concluded Lady Maria repented having given me a home in her house, and wished to drive me out of it. I had no wish to stay, but where could I go?

Both Selina and I were shocked at the change in my guardian. He looked ill, worried, and old for him. No glitter ever exceeded that with which Lady Maria's eyes regarded her daughter. On the contrary, each time that my guardian looked at her, he lost a wrinkle on his brow.

For the first time in his life, I suppose, he resorted to a species of secret understanding with me.

"She is happy," he whispered earnestly, for the brief space that Lady Maria went into the inner drawing-room.

"Yes."

"Met the poet?"

"Some one much better."

"Thank God!"

"For what, Captain Forest?" said a bitter voice behind us.

"For the greatest boon He can bestow on me;" and rising, he left the room.

Miss Seymour was charmed with Miss Glynne, who set to work with a pretty earnestness to amend many deficiencies in her education. We were very happy together, none the less so, because an innocent hilarity pervaded our schoolroom, so different from the heavy cloud of evil that hung over it before.

Glynne shortly came from Ireland, ostensibly to see his sister.

He was not in a good humour. His old uncle had insisted upon his selling out of the army.

"And now I have no business left but to marry," said he.

"Oh, do," exclaimed Selina, "and let me come and live with you."

"My dear child, do not jump at conclusions. I have a sort of conviction that if I married, I should cut my wife's throat or my own, before the honeymoon was over."

"You always think so ill of yourself, Glynne."

"On the contrary, rather too highly; I never saw a woman I cared a d——"

Selina, accustomed now to his language, put her hand on his mouth just in time.

"What parcel is this you have in your pocket?" asked she.

"Ah, by-the-bye, I believe I am a pack-horse at present. I am not very rich, or you should have something better. Here are some bog oak ornaments for you, and these are some handkerchiefs I wish you to hem for me."

"Oh, Neale shall do them ; I hate hemming."

He took the bundle of handkerchiefs out of her hand and crammed them back, all open as they were, into his pocket.

"Thank you ; the shopkeeper said he would do them for sixpence a piece, but I was romantic, and had a fancy for fingers that liked me, to do them ; then I should be certain to let no one pick my pocket of them."

"Dear Glynne," said Selina, with sudden tears of pleasure in her eyes, "would you really value my work ? Give them back to me. I will love hemming for your sake."

"I was going to ask Nellie to do half of them, but I suppose she cannot even hem."

"Why not ?" I asked, coming forward, and taking six out of Selina's hand as my share.

"Because you are a genius, and scorn hemming."

"I am no genius, and I like hemming."

"I have had no particular opinion of you

since you destroyed your statue because I found fault with it."

"I destroyed it, because I imagined you thought I meant it for myself."

"Indeed, she is not a genius, Glynne, but the dearest little girl in the world."

"Oh, I am quite inclined to think well of her, though I must still continue to think her a genius, if only for her music."

"My father and mother loved it so, and in the dark evenings, when he could bear no lamp-light, I was obliged either to recollect or improvise."

"Then Love was your genius."

"I suppose so."

"Take my handkerchiefs. I shall like you to hem them."

The lordly air with which this was said irritated me, while it pleased Selina.

"He is such a magnificent fellow, everything he says and does is so royal," said she, when he was gone.

I hemmed, and was silent; nevertheless, I thought, child-like—

“I will never be ruled by him, he swears so.”
And before many days were over, I had to make good these thoughts to myself.

When we returned the handkerchiefs hemmed to him, he was pleased to express himself most graciously, saying to Selina, “You may kiss me, if you like.”

Which she did, with the fervour proper for so great a favour.

“So may you,” he continued, to me.

“Thank you; I have no wish.”

“Ha! I thought so; nevertheless, it must be done. I never accord favours to be refused.”

He held between his fingers one of my curls, by which means he kept me prisoner, and was gently drawing me towards him. I felt like an unfortunate mouse in the claws of a great and rude cat.

In my girlhood’s pride I was most indignant at such usage. Old Anne, my only instructress

in the feminine accomplishments of the needle, had made it a *sine qua non*, I was never to work without scissors attached to my side. It was the most unlady-like thing to break, or worse, bite one's thread.

This rule served me now in good stead ; I raised my scissors, with one vigorous snip I left the curl in his hand, and was out of the door before he knew what I had done.

It was about the longest and largest curl that I had, so to avoid the discovery of its loss, I must at once roll up my hair, and banish my curls for good.

I plaited it all up in two great plaits, and winding them round my head, fastened them behind with a twisted tortoiseshell comb, and had vanity enough to be highly pleased with the classical effect.

Miss Seymour and Selina both liked the change ; my curls were always in the way, and hid my face, which was small enough without. Lady Maria was angry, expatiating from after

dinner until the gentlemen came in upon the conceit and forwardness of children, who wished to be thought young women before their time. To which I made no answer, as my present style being unavoidable, though she did not know it, she might order me to wear curls again as much as she liked, it was impossible to obey.

"Take to her curls again ? certainly not," said Glynne, as he entered the room, hearing what she said. "Thank you very much, Nellie, for obliging me."

"I was not aware the change was made to please you, Glynne," said Lady Maria, who was for some reason or another rather afraid of her son ; at least, she always gave way to him.

"Why, it was not so much to oblige me as that it was expedient"—

"I hope not so great a necessity as to cause her curls to disappear for ever," observed Captain Forest.

"Thank you, Forest," said Glynne, laughing like a great schoolboy.

"Why?" asked he, astonished.

"There are some people who do good, all unknown to themselves, while others are so unlucky as to get into mischief when they mean to be kind. So let us have some music, 'an you love me.' Allow me, my dear madam."

And he handed Lady Maria to the piano, with the most courteous air, yet looking wickedly all the time.

"Now, Nellie," he whispered to me, as he returned to his seat, "you are all safe, you'll never be asked to wear curls again, thanks to Forest. *Mille grazie* for the one you gave me."

CHAPTER XXVII.

“ But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

“ I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here :
But the old three-corner'd hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer.”—O. W. HOLMES.

IT was very sad to see my guardian. It was evident, do what he would, he could not lay the demon that possessed Lady Maria.

I liked Glynne for the way in which he sided

with him, and kept his mother's temper down, as if with a will of iron.

He began to ride out with us every day now, and made our rides very amusing. But still he was a very naughty man, and had no good ways about him, that I could see, but telling the truth, and taking my guardian's part.

"Do you see that Nellie has at last obtained an admirer?" said he to Selina one day as we were riding.

He alluded to a little old gentleman, with a long white beard, and piercing reddish eyes, who rode a beautiful Arab pony ; and always contrived to keep pace with me, though on the other side of the row.

"He is a friend of yours," I answered, rather indignantly.

"How know you that?"

"He makes signs to you sometimes, as if of disgust, and points to that beautiful girl, Miss Harrington."

"Nellie, you are, as I first said, of the genus fairy, knowing everything."

“ Now I look at him, Glynne, surely it must be, spite of the long beard, I recognise those terrible eyes, it is our old uncle the Lord of Glynne.”

“ Even so, Selina.”

“ Why does he not speak to us, and join our party ?”

“ He’d rather be d——.”

“ Hush, Glynne, for Heaven’s sake, don’t say that so loud here.”

“ Is it more wicked to say it out of doors than in ?”

“ Why does our uncle not wish to speak to me ?”

“ Because he has come up to town on particular business, with which you have nothing to do.”

“ Why does he ride on a line with Nelly, and look her through and through thus ?”

“ That is part of his particular business.”

“ To look at Nellie ?”

“ The fact is, the rampant and turbulent old gentleman is bent upon my being married. He heard me mention Nellie’s name once or twice,

and it being a feminine name, he concluded, of course, it belonged to a woman, and not a fairy."

"And why does he make those signs that Nellie spoke of?"

"Because he is disappointed. He finds she is a child, and he wants me to look at that May-pole, Miss Harrington, with matrimonial eyes."

"She is very handsome, Glynne."

"So she is; I mean to look her over some day, when I have time."

"I think my uncle more hideous than ever."

"So he is, the old sinner. Now for that grin at me, I'll punish you, sir. Hark ye, my lord, be civil enough to take care of this young lady, while I canter on with my sister, to introduce her to Miss Harrington."

The old Lord of Glynne, making faces resembling a chattering baboon, did as he was bid, and rode up to my side; while Glynne ambled off laughing, telling Selina, as she afterwards told me, that he never would have obeyed,

but for the bribe of speaking to Miss Harrington.

"He is in his dotage, and is such a little wizened specimen of humanity himself, he only sees beauty in vast masses. Miss Harrington is no doubt a very fine girl, but when she is thirty, she will weigh nearly as many stone. You may observe as a rule, Selina, Grecian beauties always become fat. They have no brains to worry them."

I was not disposed to be very friendly with this apparently cross, and certainly frightful old man, but I had discovered it was of no use troubling ones-self to be put out of temper by people one did not care for. So I returned his keen glance with as gentle a look as I could, and I guided my pony to the side of his spirited Arab, as if to meet him half-way. I did not think it would be proper in me to address him first, though I felt strongly inclined to ask him, if the servant should take me back.

"Do you like Glynne?" said he at last.

"Yes, no, not much."

"He is too rough for you."

"I think so."

"Quite right, so he is : he is not a man to play with babies."

That meant me, of course, and amused me rather.

The little old man snorted like his Arab, when he discovered that I knew what he meant by the smile that would show.

"How old are you?"

"I was fifteen the last week in June."

"Then you are—a baby."

"Yes, in the eyes of the law."

"Do you admire Miss Harrington?"

"Yes, very much, as far as beauty goes."

"What does she lack besides?"

"I do not think people whose forehead and nose are on a line with each other, that is, straight, are ever very sensible."

"And what do you think of noses turned up?"

"Oh, those people are merry and piquant."

"And a hooked nose?"

How he grinned : his own nose was hooked.

"They are not good-tempered," said I, laughing a little, as if to deprecate his wrath.

"You are a good little girl," said he. "Do you like her?" continued he, twirling his whip in the direction of Selina, who passed us, smiling at me as she did so. Glynne apparently never saw us ; he was leaning over with one hand on the pommel of Miss Harrington's saddle, talking with the most earnest and engaging suavity.

"Yes, as I do my life."

"Yet she is a fool."

"No, no, neglected, ill-used."

"No doubt," he answered ; his voice seemed to come from out of the Arab, it was so deep.

"Now," thought I, "why should I not tell him about Mr. Graham ? How could I manage it ?"

"Your countenance has changed, of what are you thinking ? Can I do that girl good ?"

"I think so ; a good and worthy man loves her, but will not offer because he is poor."

"Does she love him ?"

"How can I tell ? he has not offered to her."

I thought he would have fallen from his Arab ; it seems he was laughing, though no sound issued from his mouth. At last he said,—

"Child, let Miss Harrington affect the dignified woman, and put on the heroics as much as she likes. They do not become little babies. But go on ; in what profession is he ?"

But for Selina's sake I think I should have become sulky, and perhaps it would have been better I had done so, than answered. For he began to swear (though I allow to himself,) just as bad as Glynne, and he looked the "Imaginary Personage" to perfection.

"If you do not get my uncle into a better humour by the time we pass you again," whispered Glynne to me, as they went by, "you shall ride with him for another hour."

"We shall see about that," thought I. How-

ever, I was very sorry for Selina's sake, that he should have taken this sudden dislike to Mr. Graham, on account of his profession. He growled, grumbled, pished, and swore all up the ride, saying at last,—

“A parson, a parson ! forsooth ! what good does a parson ever do ?”

“They pray to God for people who swear, and who never pray themselves.”

He scowled at me angrily ; but as I did not wish to lose an opportunity of serving Selina, I continued—

“If you please, my lord, he is a very good, sensible man, and would make Selina happy ; and if you don't like parsons, as you call them, that is no reason why other people should not. Some people even like babies ; and it is very hard, if we are born, that we do not find also some one to like us.”

“Do you think any one likes me ?”

“Yes, Glynne does, and so would Mr. Graham if you helped him to a living.”

I heard a sort of a strange sound that formed the words “help him to the devil!”—at least, I am afraid it was.

So I thought it best to say no more, lest I should be sent there too.

We did not appear to part very good friends ; and Glynne, with his brows meeting, left us to go home with the servant, while he accompanied his uncle. The last thing I saw was the Arab curveting, as if ridden by some one possessed ; and I looked forward to seeing Glynne in the evening with some dread.

It seems I troubled myself for nothing. He never was so amiable,—almost affectionate to Selina, quite chatty with Captain Forest, half kind to his mother : he laughed at and teased me to his heart’s content, as if from sheer happiness.

“So you know a curate, do you ?” he whispered in the course of the evening.

“Yes, of the name of Graham, and he helps my uncle; and lives at Willow Wood.”

He thought himself very wise, no doubt, trying to find out Mr. Graham's direction. I did not see why babies should not be equally sapient; and was so happy in the thought that perhaps something good would happen for Selina, that I did not heed his badgering.

We did not meet "my lord" again out riding,—in fact, Glynne said he had left town, and that he must go after him soon. As for escorting us any more out riding, we were not to expect it. Miss Harrington had left town, and so had all people who had the least regard for their reputations as people of ton. It did not become a common ordinary mortal like himself to preach to poetesses and geniuses, but he supposed that now was the time when such "fry" enjoyed London.

He had discovered Selina's little predilection, which had revived under the influence of a partial fit of low spirits; but he nearly extinguished it for ever by incessant raillery.

He asked the commonest question in the most doggerel verse, and he called her "Polyhymnia," even to her mother. Selina loved him too well, to care what he did, provided he laughed and chatted.

And, indeed, when he was not in the house, an ominous gloom and dulness hung over it,—my guardian appearing quite unequal to the task of enlivening it, as heretofore.

One day Selina and I received each a little parcel by the post. Hers contained a small watch, beautifully enamelled at the back with roses and forget-me-nots, on a royal purple ground; there was a chain to match. Of course, I expected the same; but after opening an infinite number of papers, and beginning to have misgivings as to there being anything, I discovered a coral necklace of round pink beads, such as godmothers or fathers bestow upon their baby name-child.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ My son, be this thy simple plan—
Serve God, and love thy fellow man ;
Forget not, in temptation’s hour,
That sin lends sorrow double power ;
Count life a stage upon thy way,
And follow conscience, come what may.
Alike with Heaven and earth sincere,
With hand, and brow, and bosom clear,
Fear God, and know no other fear !”

PRINGLE.

GLYNNE never took any notice of Isabel, though I thought she grew handsomer every time she came to spend the day with us.

Selina asked him one day, after he had returned from Ireland, if he did not admire her ?

“ Who ?” he asked.

“ Isabel Berrington.”

"Who is she? Where does she live? Is she like Miss Harrington?"

"You dull Glynne! She comes here every Saturday, and is Nellie's cousin, and she admires you immensely."

"Tell her I cannot return her affection; I never looked at her."

"Why not? she is so handsome."

"I am conscious that a person comes here now and then with an unpleasant drawl in her voice; or is it an elderly gentlewoman who always puts herself in my situation (she would be most devilishly surprised if she was, I am thinking!) whom I dislike? I have a notion somehow they come together very often. I don't know one from the other, my dear child."

It was clearly impossible to interest him about Isabel.

Otherwise, as Selina said, "how charming it would be if Glynne would marry her, and both of us go and live with them." Much too charming to be true.

" You seem very strict about going to church, Nellie," said he to me one Sunday evening ; " what do you go for ? "

" To say my prayers."

" Not to hear what the parson says, then ? "

" Yes, of course."

" Pray now, what does he say ? "

" You had better go and hear for yourself."

" Perhaps I will, some day. I don't want to go where Lady Maria will, when she dies."

" Glynne !" I exclaimed, in horror.

There was silence for a few minutes. Suddenly he rose up, and crossed where I was sitting.

" Look at me, Nellie."

I would not have done so if I could have helped it, for my eyes were full of tears ; I compressed the lids together to disperse them ; but I knew the eyelashes must retain some moisture, they felt so heavy as I raised them.

He looked at me earnestly, and so long, that I rose to avoid the gaze.

“Do not be ashamed of those tears, Nellie, they may have saved a soul.”

And he left the room.

I told Selina what had passed, and she said—“Perhaps, Nellie, that was why your life was preserved at sea, that you might teach Glynne the only virtue he wants.”

Thought I—“How enthusiastic Selina is about those she loves ; as if Glynne had not some glaring sins besides this one, and as if—but I was ashamed of pursuing that thought,—as well I might, knowing the price given for the saving even of one soul.

On the next Sunday, Glynne went to church with us. Our clergyman was not a very good one,—that is, he dwelt much in his sermons upon the joys and pleasures of heaven, in comparison with the pains and horrors of hell ; but the ways and means of reaching the one and avoiding the other he did not point out. The common sense of every-day life, and its duties, placed side by side with those of religion, never

formed any part of his sermons. They were altogether high-flown and ecstatic; and if they touched the chords of some sensitive heart, as no doubt they did, still they were not suitable for one on the perilous brink of atheism.

Glynne required a plain and sober statement of the evidences of God—an unvarnished and sensible description of a man's heart. When he could deny neither the existence of the one, nor the weakness or depravity of the other, he would be in some measure prepared for higher food.

At present, the sermon he heard this day rather exaggerated his besetting sin, than smote it.

"Pray, Nellie, do I look like—or feel like—a person who can go psalm-singing all through eternity? I'd as lief die like a dog!"

"Oh! hush, Glynne!"

"He said so,—your favourite parson, whom you go to hear twice a week, said, that if I threw Satan behind me, if I kept all the command-

ments—if I rejected all pleasure—if I hated the world, and all that was in it—if I avoided my friends, cut my relations, and despised every body—I should spend eternity in one long tuneful hymn of melody and praise. I am sorry to say, I left his presence with a great idea that I would do all he said I was not to do, just to escape that long whining—

“ Oh ! Glynne, there is an unknown sin, not pardonable.” In my hurry and fear I laid my hands on his lips.

At first he looked astonished ; then he took hold of my hand, as I was about to withdraw it, and held it in his.

“ That’s blasphemy, is it ? ” He spoke in a low, quiet voice, which seemed in strange contrast to the colour that was rushing up to his brow.

“ I do not know, Glynne,” I answered humbly ; “ but God has made the world appear very different to us all. Why should not heaven be the same ? It may be the occupation of the

gentleman, whose sermon you heard to-day, to swell the choir of heaven ; and yet not yours or mine. We are not in the same position as he is, here."

" And what place do you think I can fill in heaven ?"

" You may be one of God's warriors, who have to fight with the evil spirits of darkness, for the souls of poor sinful men."

" And you ?"

" Perhaps I may be a little messenger, or ministering spirit."

" And since when have you thought of these things ?"

" I think of them always ; because, Glynne, I am so lonely in the world ; an orphan, with no relations."

" Yet people seem to love you."

" Because no one would be unkind to the fatherless, motherless : and before they went to heaven, my parents bade me act so as to deserve love, and then I should not miss theirs

so much, but wait patiently until God called me home."

" Then the pangs of death have no terrors for you?"

" I do not know; I cannot tell, our nature is so weak; but we must suffer, because the evil and the good that is within us, will have a final struggle. I have read and heard, Glynne, that mortal dread and fear sometimes overwhelm a dying soul, yet the last smile on their lips is one of ineffable happiness,—the last words they uttered spoke of bright and glorious light."

" Go on."

" I think perhaps that is the opening of heaven to receive the soul, the light glistening from the angels' wings, as they descend for it; the loving ministering seraphs in the middle, with outstretched arms, while the warrior angels sweep round in swift circles, that no spirit of darkness, no sight of earth may intervene between heaven and the saved one."

" Go on."

“ Sometimes I think my father and mother will come for me. But, surely, they will be waiting at heaven’s gate.”

“ Hush, Nellie! stay, child, you are excited; you are wanted on earth yet.”

He put his arm round me gently, but in a moment I was quiet. I had forgotten where I was, to whom I was speaking.

“ I like your sermon,” said he calmly. “ Now, tell me, what sort of man is this Mr. Graham?”

“ Go and see him.”

“ I have.”

“ Oh! Glynne, how good of you. I think he will just suit Selina.”

“ She seems of a feeble, changeable mind.”

“ Oh no; was she not constant all those three years, and nearly lost her life?”

“ By the heaven above us! then, all that story is true. May the——” he stopped himself in time, and left the room with the whirl of a tempest.

CHAPTER XXIX.

"A woman moved, is like a fountain troubled,
Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty."

SHAKESPEARE.

We did not see Glynne for a long time after this. Christmas-day came and went. We had been quiet, not to say dull. A crisis seemed pending over the house, but of what sort we none of us could define. So far from Selina's improved spirits and looks, not to say temper, pleasing Lady Maria, each day seemed to add to her discontent and ill-humour.

My guardian either was or made himself much occupation from home. He was seldom merry now, but, in other respects, nothing could exceed his goodness and forbearance.

Selina was disheartened by her mother's conduct; perhaps a little impatient at her own state of affairs. Her present love-matter (that is, if it was a passage of love with her, for she had never told us) was beginning to assume the vague and lingering appearance of her first one. Sonnets were written—visionary, sad, almost despairing.

Thus we struggled on till about the middle of March, when, being in my attic up-stairs, washing my hands before going to breakfast (for I always worked in the studio the earliest time I could in the morning), I heard Selina's voice calling me.

It sounded from my former room, and I made every possible haste to run down stairs to meet her. She had her foot on them, to come up; an open letter was in her hand, and her face was flushed with excitement; nevertheless she said,

“ Nellie, what are you doing up here in the servants' apartments; why did you change your room ?”

“ That is a profound secret, known only to one faithful heart,” I answered, endeavouring to turn her round to go back again.

“ I wish to see where you sleep,” she said, looking almost like Glynne, with her determined air.

“ Go if you wish it; but the letter, let me see that letter.”

“ Take it to my room, read it, and I will join you.”

It was from Mr. Graham, who, in a manly yet most tender manner, made her then and there the offer of his hand—his heart having been in her possession already; in fact, almost from the first moment he had seen her. He was the more earnest to do so, because her brother, “ the Glynne,” who had been staying with him several times on late occasions, saw no impropriety in his so doing, though he was still nothing but a poor curate. Nevertheless, harassed by the state of his feelings, worn out by the fear that others would contend with him

(under advantages to which he could not aspire) for a prize so great, his health and spirits were beginning to suffer. Yet was he not wholly rash, or vain and presumptuous, in trying to win her favour solely on his own merits, for he had the prospect before him of being presented to a living before the year was out, &c., &c., &c.

In fact, it was a most eloquent letter, and owed much of its eloquence to being so direct from the writer's heart.

Yet did Selina say nothing to me, as she returned, but with a grave and quiet face took my hand, and we went down to breakfast.

Lady Maria was sitting at the table, Captain Forest was standing leaning against the mantelpiece, more than usual annoyance in his face, a colder and more exasperating glitter in hers.

“ May I ask,” said Selina to her mother, “ why my cousin was turned out of her own room, and sent to sleep up stairs in the loft with the maid-servants ?”

"She is not in the loft, her room is partitioned off."

"Why was she sent there at all?"

"You have no right to enquire: I am mistress here."

"I am so far mistress of my part of the house, that I have ordered her bed to be placed in my apartment, and desired the little room next to it, in which you keep your packing boxes, to be fitted up for her as a dressing-room."

Truly when people are in the wrong, how soon they are cowed; whom they have most despised before, now tread them under foot.

"I hope I have done right, Captain Forest," continued Selina, which appeal she might as well have left alone, for as he answered—

"Certainly,"

Lady Maria's rage burst forth. If they did not, I knew that Selina carried a new heart within her bosom, and so far from caring for the words poured out upon her, was perfectly indifferent to them.

My guardian grew pale and horror-stricken, especially when, with a manner and words little short of frenzy, she exclaimed, “ I have not now to learn the shameful, the disgraceful league between you. It is but too well known to me, that Captain Forest, my husband, yes, my husband was, and is — ”

“ Hush ! ” said Selina, with her hand up, “ I came down stairs this morning, with the intention of asking yours and my step-father’s consent to my marriage with Mr. Graham.”

“ ‘Tis false, ‘tis a subterfuge—”

But she could say no more ; for my guardian, his whole countenance illumined, his eyes sparkling, exclaimed,—

“ Selina, is it true, thank God, thank God, I have not your unhappiness to answer for ? ”

“ Then you were the captain of the Blunderbore, I only care to know that : ” and she smiled happily, though she blushed as well.

“ It is true ; it is too true. But for the painful situation in which I should have placed you, long

ago would I have asked you to forgive the boyish folly, nay, wickedness, that sported with the tender heart of one so young and guileless."

"Then you loved her?" asked Selina, pointing to her mother.

"She is my wife," answered my guardian, with a grave dignity in his manner that ought to have reproved Selina.

It did.

"I beg your pardon, Captain Forest. Here is my brother's letter regarding my marriage. Mamma, will you talk the matter over with Captain Forest? A little explanation, the slightest acknowledgment on either of your parts, would have caused me to act differently to what I have done. No one likes to be thought a fool."

There was a pause while Lady Maria and my guardian read "the Glynne's" letter.

"It seems perfectly satisfactory," he exclaimed joyfully. "Ah, Maria, at last we may be happy," he added kindly.

"It is your own fault that we are not so already," she answered coldly.

"But if we had explained, as Selina wished."

"Selina has nothing to do with my unhappiness. We have an evil spirit in the house, to whose influence I have imputed everything that has occurred."

"For God's sake, explain yourself. What new crime am I to hear?"

The contraction of his brow was painful to me, showing the sudden transition from joy and relief to the already once-wrought pressure on his mind.

"I would willingly compound that we should have with us always a nature, faulty no doubt to a great degree, but truthful, such as Selina's, than another, whose cunning and deceit are matchless."

I was eating my breakfast with what dispatch I could, longing to be alone with Selina, and was the last person to perceive on whom her eyes now glittered.

"This child!" exclaimed my guardian, with a vehemence that none had ever heard in his voice before.

Lady Maria turned pale.

"Do you mean this child?" he continued, with slow and distinct emphasis, laying his hand on my head at the same time.

"You shall not touch her; I will not be insulted thus, Captain Forest." And she snatched his hand away with the utmost anger.

He looked at her fixedly, one could almost trace his thoughts, as they passed like shadows over his countenance. It seemed as if he said to himself, "One evil thought between us is about to be removed—is removed for ever, yet another arises as strong in its place; there is to be no peace between us, it is hopeless: there shall be none. Fate is inexorable." As the look of settled resignation and half-despair came into his eyes, so did he say calmly,—

"God forgive you."

In a moment he was gone.

We sat in silence, motionless, as if he would return.

At last Lady Maria said to me, " You see what you have done."

" Come with me, Nellie," said Selina quickly.

" When I have a home, it shall be yours also."

So we left her, I very sorrowful and sad, without knowing why.

" Glynne will be here by four o'clock, he will set us all right. I have ordered him to be shown up here at once."

So we occupied ourselves heartily until then. Meantime Neale said that my guardian had gone out of the house, as he left the breakfast-table, and had never come back, and that my lady was getting very anxious, wondering where he was.

At four, thanks, as Selina said, to those punctual things, trains, Glynne arrived.

" What has happened to my lady ? She bolted into my arms, as if I was emperor of all

the world, and was proportionably disappointed when she discovered it was only her son."

Selina told him everything. I left them together, to open their hearts to each other, while I endeavoured to chisel my sad thoughts away.

When I returned, Glynne said,—

" Oh ! you wicked little viper, coming between man and wife. I'll go and look for a curate to carry you off : one so high-church, as to perch you on the pinnacle of the steeple."

CHAPTER XXX.

“Oh! cast thou not affection from thee
In this bitter world.
Hold to thine heart, that only treasure part;
Watch, guard it, suffer not a breath to dim
The bright gem’s purity.”—MRS. HEMANS.

THERE was no Captain Forest at dinner.
It was presumed Lady Maria loved him dearly,
for she could eat nothing, and looked twenty
years older.

“Don’t weep, my dear madam, I’ll have him
cried, or I’ll get the inspector of police to look
him up, or I’ll go to the Cider Cellars. As
he is for once on the loose, he may have gone
there to amuse himself.”

Lady Maria disdained any reply.

But the next morning she gave in a little.

"I went, as I told you I would, dear madam, to every possible place I could think of," answered Glynne, to her appeal. "I spent nearly the whole night visiting one odd place after another, sadly compromising my character by so doing. I personally inspected all the lock-ups, and turned over a score of drunken men with my own hands, to catch a glimpse of the beloved face. All of no avail. You know him better than I do; he is not a sort of person now to take to cold water, do you think, under a pressure of painful circumstances?"

"What can you mean, man?" exclaimed Lady Maria, aghast.

"Or suppose he has bolted to America? We must telegraph. Or to his relations? Has he any?"

"His mother," murmured Lady Maria, with a sigh of relief.

"Then perhaps you will go down to Erith and see for yourself?"

“Certainly not ; if Captain Forest does not know what is due to his wife, she will be the last person to teach him.”

“I am ignorant of the amount of etiquette that ought to exist between husband and wife on such occasions ; but as I plead guilty to a slight degree of attachment towards my papa-in-law, I think I will go for my own satisfaction to Erith.”

In the course of the day, according to Glynne’s arrangement, Mr. Graham arrived. Though he looked radiantly happy, Selina had reason to compliment herself on the amount of his attachment. He was no longer too robust and healthy, but very much the contrary. To my mind, I never saw anything so pretty as Selina, for as she said herself, “There is no disgrace in this attachment.”

But, spite of their happiness, and mine to see theirs, we were devoured by anxiety. Four days had elapsed since my guardian’s disappearance, and nothing had been heard of him,

or of Glynne either, since he had left to go to Erith.

All Lady Maria's pride and haughtiness vanished ; and we pitied her to the bottom of our hearts. She was like one distracted—going to Erith in the day-time, where she had heard her husband had never been, though Glynne had, and only coming from there to go back again ; while she had gangs of men employed, dragging rivers and ponds, and every possible place she could think of.

She implored Mr. Graham, as if he had been the dearest friend of her whole life, instead of one of whose existence she had only just heard, to seek every hole and corner of London ; she hung upon Selina for consolation and hope, with kisses and tender words, almost revealing, in the depths of her remorse, the secret by which she had allured Captain Forest from her, while she was equally affectionate and kind to me.

At last she was exhausted, and lay slumbering uneasily on the sofa, with Selina and I watch-

ing her, about eight o'clock, on the fifth evening, when a thundering knock at the front door shook the whole house.

She rose instantly, trying, exhausted as she was, to put on an air of offended dignity.

Only Glynne appeared.

She could not frame words to ask for her husband, though all doubts as to his safety were dispersed, as we looked at Glynne's face.

He was in his merriest mood, his eyes not twinkling, but blazing with mischief.

"Well, he is all right," said he, at last.

"And where is he?"

"Oh, quite safe, and very jolly, which is more than I should be in his circumstances. It's blowing a gale."

"When will he come?"

"He desired his love, and you may expect him again in three years; perhaps two and a half."

"You are mad, Neville."

"Not at all; I assure you those were his last

words, as I shook his hand and bid him good bye at the Nore. I came as fast here as I could by train."

Lady Maria sunk back.

"To-morrow you will see him gazetted as Captain of Her Majesty's ship, Hawke, sent to cruize on that pleasant and salubrious coast, Africa. Her former captain, Austen, had a tender wife, who was so afflicted with the notion of her husband's probable fate, that she gave him no peace until he tendered his resignation. Forest, who seemed to have an idea that the more unhealthy the place, the more suitable to his condition, stepped into the vacant situation with the alacrity of a lover—Ha! hem—how do you do, Mr. Graham?"

Thus Glynne rattled on, and it was strange to see how Lady Maria, freed from the one dread of her husband's death, began now to gather up matter for condemning and abusing him.

He had wantonly outraged all her tenderest feelings, insulted her as a woman and wife. It

was fortunate he could not return for three years—it would take that time for her to recover from the effects of his rude and uncourteous treatment. In fact, it was very sad to see her, and still more sad to think of my poor guardian. Nevertheless, our minds were so much relieved from the first heavy pressure, that we could rejoice and dwell upon Selina and her plans.

"I do not see why you are to wait six months for a probable living," said Glynne, one day; "cannot you live upon five hundred a year for a while?"

"Five hundred a year! of course we could," exclaimed Mr. Graham; "but where are we to get that sum?"

"Selina's fortune of ten thousand pounds, at five per cent. interest, brings in that sum."

"I did not know she had a farthing," said Mr. Graham.

"Yes she has, just that, and no more. If you can marry on it I shall be glad, as I hate

stopping here, and must go back to my uncle."

"Are you quite sure, Glynne? for Lady Maria seemed to insinuate one day, I was dependant on her pleasure."

"If you are willing to get married, I'll settle the matter with her, and that immediately."

He returned in the course of half-an-hour, not looking very good-humoured.

"Now, Graham, be off to your lawyers, and consult with them as to settlements. Here is Lady Maria's acknowledgment for the ten thousand pounds, and here is a bank bill for you, my dear, to get your pins and things. I hope three hundred pounds is enough, I could screw out no more."

Mr. Graham insisted upon seeing Selina alone for a minute before he went.

"That is a sensible man for a parson, Nellie; he is going to make Selina name the day. By this means, he nails not only Selina, but the lawyers; for wicked rogues and thieves as they

are, they were never yet known to be so base as to delay a marriage after the day was fixed."

"Had you a scene with Lady Maria?"

"I believe you, I had. She wanted to make out that Selina was to have nothing until her death, and then only at her option. However, I showed her Forest's 'power of attorney' that he had given me, and as he married without a settlement, he has a husband's right over all she possesses. Poor Forest was properly well blessed for being a fool, I can tell you."

"Her father loved Selina, I have heard."

"And not his son?"

"I heard he disinherited him."

"What a lot of things one may hear, if one is silly enough to open one's ears. Did you ever learn how Forest was taken in by Lady Maria?"

"No."

"Hah, you are curious; so am I, and we neither of us shall ever know, for he won't tell. I tried him hard; and of course, she cannot, without exposing herself. That is a worthy, true man,

that Forest ; in the midst of all his worry, bustle, and business, he took care to settle about Selina's marriage and money, to give me all necessary directions about you—by the bye, you are never to go to school, that was in your father's will”—

“ Yes.”

“ Dead people should never make rules for the living. It might be both expedient and advisable that you should do so, especially now Selina is going to be married, and you are left to the tender mercies of Lady Maria and myself.”

“ I do not fear being unhappy. I dare say Lady Maria will—”

“ What ?”

“ I do not know how to explain it.”

“ You mean, now that Forest is out of the way, her infernal jealousy will cease.”

“ I should not have explained it that way.”

“ No, you would have left out ‘ infernal,’ and put in ‘ unfortunate.’ I can talk just like a woman if I choose. Pray how do you like the idea of my being your guardian ?”

"I hope I shall not be so troublesome, as to require the care of others than Lady Maria and my uncle."

"Which means you won't have me. Well, so I expected. Good morning."

Putting his head in again at the door, he added — "Would you like my old uncle instead? He took a fancy to you, though you may think not."

I disdained any answer. Sometimes Glynne was like the silliest schoolboy. Isabel rejoiced in Selina's happiness, though she could not help sighing over poor doleful Mr. Hamilton.

"I am sure he will feel it most dreadfully," said she to me, "and I should not be in the least surprised to hear he fell into a consumption and died."

"Then he can leave Selina and Mr. Graham his pretty house and estate, and that will be doing the noble action he wished, leaving his name ever fresh and green to her memory."

This was too poetical a flight for Isabel, who

turned to the more mundane business of settling the bridesmaids' dresses, with alacrity.

Neale did not approve of the marriage at all. She never expected Miss Glynne, "so beautiful, and such a lady, to marry any one less than a Lord. And now she was going to throw herself away."

Mr. Graham assured her, "he would love Selina better than any Lord, and if Neale would come and live with them, she should judge for herself."

Which went a little way towards mollifying her. But the most effectual panacea of all, was to see Selina's own happiness, and the change that a true love made in her character.

Just as the sun warms, vivifies, and brings forth all that is beautiful and fresh on earth, while the dark clouds envelope all in gloom.

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